

A  
MARTIAN EXAMINES  
CHRISTIANITY



ARTHUR LEVETT

**A MARTIAN EXAMINES  
CHRISTIANITY**

# A MARTIAN EXAMINES CHRISTIANITY

BY  
ARTHUR LEVETT

LONDON:  
WATTS & CO.,  
5 & 6 JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET STREET, E.C.4

*First Published 1934*

Printed and Published in Great Britain by C. A. Watts & Co. Limited  
5 & 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4

TO MY ESTEEMED FRIEND  
E—— N——,  
WHOSE ASSISTANCE IN THE PREPARATION  
OF MY MANUSCRIPT HAS BEEN INVALUABLE,  
THIS BOOK IS MOST GRATEFULLY  
DEDICATED.

THE AUTHOR.



## FOREWORD

My theme is centuries old, my points are not new, and my Man from Mars is, I fear, hackneyed. But where on earth could I find a man that had never heard of religion and was intelligent enough to ask questions?

Why write at all, then, if there is nothing new to say and no new way to say it?

My first excuse is that the literature on religion is so vast that few can find the time to delve into its many phases, and I know of no single volume that attempts to present what might perhaps be called a bird's-eye view of the Christian religion.

My Martian, totally ignorant of the entire subject and with an unprejudiced mind, seeks information on many points. It is my hope that the report of his investigation, with the notes indicating the sources of the information he acquired, may serve as a starting-point for those who wish to go more fully into the subject.

My second excuse is that when one has unthinkingly accepted time-honoured absurd beliefs as a matter of course, sometimes a direct question or two tersely put will startle him into wondering why he has been so child-like and credulous.

Blind faith, which holds in bondage reason,  
May, by a question aptly posed,  
Be put to flight,  
And superstition's strangling clutch  
From progress' throat be loosed.





# CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	THE MARTIAN VISITS THE EARTH . . .	1
II.	THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD . . .	4
III.	THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO PRAYER . . .	18
IV.	THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO SIN . . .	25
V.	THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD'S WORD . . .	30
VI.	THE MARTIAN EXAMINES THE OLD TESTA- MENT . . . . .	36
VII.	THE MARTIAN EXAMINES THE NEW TESTA- MENT . . . . .	43
VIII.	THE MARTIAN EXAMINES THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN SAVIOUR . . . . .	51
IX.	THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO EVERLASTING LIFE . . . . .	60
X.	THE MARTIAN EXAMINES THE MORAL PRE- CEPTS OF CHRISTIANITY . . . . .	67
XI.	THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO MIRACLES . . .	76
XII.	THE MARTIAN EXAMINES INTO FAITH . . .	93
XIII.	THE MARTIAN EXAMINES INTO THE VALUE OF RELIGION . . . . .	106



## CHAPTER I

### THE MARTIAN VISITS THE EARTH

It was such a day of rejoicing as had never before been known upon Mars. After centuries of thought and experiment Gravity had been conquered. At last would Martians be able to explore in person that distant planet which they had long known was inhabited by beings like themselves, whose goings and comings they had observed for many years through their super-telescopes, whose languages they had learned through their sensitive radios, and whose intimate life they were just beginning to observe through their long-since-perfected television receivers.

With what acclaim Martians throughout the planet listened to the words addressed by the president of the Scientists' Association to the young inventor, as he prepared to step into his machine which would carry him through space to that planet upon which never before had stepped one who had not there seen his first light of day.

"Throughout the ages," spoke the president, "our scientists have laboured for the benefit of mankind, impelled by the thirst for knowledge and the good that ensues therefrom. They have spent their lives in her pursuit to such effect that Nature, although reluctantly, has yielded to us nearly all of her secrets. We have explored the universe with our telescopes, our spectroscopes, and our radios, and from the outlook of our own planet we have little to learn. We have, it is true, failed

## 2 THE MARTIAN VISITS THE EARTH

to solve what we shall probably never solve—the why and wherefore of our existence.

“One other great problem of the ages has been the control of the force of gravity. Without that control we have been tied to our planet, and our field of inquiry has been practically exhausted.

“To you, my brother, has been given the great ability to solve this problem. To-day we, in our search for truth, no longer are bound by the ties of gravity. Through your efforts that force has become our handmaiden.

“It is therefore fitting that you, as the perfecter of gravity control, should have the honour to be the first to set forth on interplanetary travel to visit the denizens of our sister planet; to gather at first hand such fruits of knowledge as we in our limited field have heretofore been precluded from reaping. You have learned their principal languages, and are well equipped to converse with them and obtain from them such knowledge as they possess. It is our hope that when you return to us you will bring with you much knowledge of things which to us will be as new, and that such knowledge will assist us in our march towards the goal of truth—the only goal towards which a true scientist directs his step. Above all, we trust that upon your return you will be able to enlighten us as to the meaning of that strange word ‘religion,’ of which we have heard so much from our sister planet and have been able to understand so little.

“Peace be with you. May you have a safe journey and a happy and profitable sojourn on that distant shore.”

Who on this earth will forget that memorable afternoon when from out the sky there landed on the International Aviation Field a strange-looking shell bearing no resemblance whatever to an aeroplane? With no

engine, no propeller, no helicopter, it nevertheless settled as lightly as a bird on the field. With what wonder we gazed at its curious series of levers, its oxygen tanks, its store of concentrated food capsules, and, above all, its lone passenger of calm and dignified mien who stepped forth to announce that he was an inhabitant of the planet Mars and begged our hospitality.

Nor will anyone forget the cry of scepticism and of ridicule that broke forth over the land as the news went forth, till the stranger, always courteous and understanding, demonstrated how his flight had been made possible by his control of the force of gravity. Scientists, engineers, and newspaper reporters gasped as by a simple shift of a lever the vessel rose from the ground and with incredible speed disappeared from sight—to return in a few minutes after having covered a distance of hundreds of miles away from the earth.

Scepticism ceased, and all the world to-day knows how much science has advanced through the information imparted by our Martian visitor before he turned his way to the planet of his birth. Much has been written and much will be written of what he imparted to us of the wisdom gathered by the inhabitants of our sister planet before man appeared on this earth.

It should be remembered, however, that the main objective of our visitor was not to impart but to gain knowledge. It is therefore meet to record his experience when, in seeking the meaning of religion, to him a strange mysterious subject, he met with the committee of churchmen appointed to enlighten him. No one can object to the fairness displayed in selecting as members of this committee a Modernist, a Roman Catholic Priest, a Rabbi, and a Fundamentalist.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD

"GENTLEMEN," said the Martian, addressing the little group, "I find it difficult to express my appreciation of the opportunity you give me to learn something of religion. That is a word for which we have no equivalent on my planet, and one of my main objects in visiting you is to acquaint myself thoroughly with the subject, for you evidently set great store upon it, and we on Mars are ever alert to learn of anything that makes for the progress of our race."

"We shall be glad to enlighten you," answered the Priest, "but are we to infer that the Martians are a godless race, that you do not worship and pray to God, that you have no reverence for Him or for His works?"

"Worship God? Pray to God? Who is God?" asked the Martian. "We on Mars have heard you address someone you call God, and we have observed your ceremonies in which you prostrate yourselves and ask his intervention in the affairs of your world; but we have never been able to understand who God is."

"God," answered the Priest, "is the Creator of Heaven and Earth, He who sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, to die on the cross for the sins of the world."

"I deny that," exclaimed the Rabbi. "God is the Creator of the universe, but the Messiah has not yet appeared. There is and always has been but one God, and Jehovah is His name."

The Priest turned to him :

" Your people deny He has yet appeared, but we know He did appear in the form of God's Son. He not only appeared as Jesus, the Christ, but He frequently appeared in the form of the Holy Ghost, and still comes to us in that form to comfort and sustain us. You are correct in saying there is only one God, because He is always One—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. These three are one."

The Modernist addressed the Martian :

" I trust, sir, you will not permit yourself to be misled by these statements. The anthropomorphic god of the ancient world, to whom my friends refer, is gone. The new conception of God is Law and Order. His laws are eternal and immutable, and we believe that in accordance with those laws Nature has unfolded and developed, and that Man himself has developed from the lower order of beings."

" He is sinfully wrong," retorted the Priest. " God is a Being, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and truth. That is why we worship Him as the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and pray to Him for guidance."

The Fundamentalist broke in :

" He created the universe out of nothing. He said ' Let there be light,' and there was light. He made the earth and the stars and the firmament and all that exists. He created Man in His own image, and loves us in spite of our sins."

He cast a baleful look at the Modernist as he added :  
" And He made us and all living creatures just as we are to-day."

The Priest and the Rabbi nodded assent.

" Absurd," exclaimed the Modernist ; " ancient folklore which we have long ago outgrown. Let me tell you

## 6 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD

who God is. God is the Supreme Energy, the Directing Mind, the Power Beyond Authority."

"Humph," interrupted the Fundamentalist scornfully; "as usual, in order to pose as Christians when you are not, you Modernists indulge in high-sounding phrases as to God which mean absolutely nothing and which you cannot explain. 'Power Beyond Authority' indeed! Will you tell us what that means?"

"It means," answered the Modernist, "that He is the Benevolent Spirit of the universe, pervading the universe and yet transcending our conception of it; the Eternal Love and the Unfailing Mercy."

"Ah," said the Priest sarcastically, "I am sure that is enlightening. The Modernist's conception of God transcends his conception, and that of everyone else too."

The Martian had listened to the dispute with ever-increasing amazement and bewilderment. He looked from one to the other. It was apparent that he comprehended nothing of the argument.

He was visibly embarrassed. "Gentlemen," he said, when he had a chance to speak, "I crave your indulgence. I asked who is God, but I cannot possibly follow you in your conflicting statements. Apparently God is some sort of a supernatural, all-wise, omnipotent being who is benevolent and who loves you. You affirm he is the creator of you and of me. Now I do not know who made us. May I ask how you know this?"

"In the first place, we are here, are we not?" asked the Fundamentalist.

"Yes, I can see that," remarked the Martian dryly.

"Well then, if we can see that we are here and exist, someone must have created us, must he not?"

"I am not so sure of that," said the Martian. "God exists, you say."



"Certainly He exists," said the Priest.

"Then someone must have created him, must he not?"

"God has always existed," replied the Priest. "No one created Him; He is the beginning."

"I am unable to follow your reasoning," said the Martian. "If you accept the proposition that God always existed, why may you not assume that life also always existed? Why should you not assume that the forces of Nature always existed and contained within them the germ of life which has developed into the various forms now existing? It seems to me just as logical to say that life and the forces of Nature always existed as to say that God always existed."

"Then you deny that God exists," exclaimed the Fundamentalist, "the all-wise Heavenly Father who watches over us and directs our destinies and the destinies of all that live?"

"Not at all," answered the Martian. "I will say only that *we* do not know who is responsible for our being. Won't you therefore enlighten me further as to God and as to your creation?"

"I will," answered the Fundamentalist. "After God had created the heavens and earth, He made the first man out of the dust of the earth. Having done this, He observed that it was not well for man to be alone, so He made the first woman out of the man's rib. He planted a beautiful garden and placed them in it. There they lived in the greatest of happiness. They were perfect when He made them, but they fell into sin."

"You say they were perfect," interrupted the Martian. "How then could they commit the error of sinning?"

The Priest answered: "They were not perfect in

## 8 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD

their judgment nor in their hearts. They were tempted, and they fell."

"Tempted?" asked the Martian. "Tempted by whom?"

"By Satan," answered the Fundamentalist.

"And who is Satan?"

"Satan," said the Fundamentalist, "is the Devil. He was originally an angel in Heaven; his name was then Lucifer, and he was beloved of God. In his pride he rebelled against God and was expelled from Heaven. He is the embodiment and the source of all evil, and never ceases in his efforts to lead us from God into the paths of evil. In the form of a serpent he tempted the first woman. She listened to the tempter and fell from grace and the man with her. Through their fall all our suffering and misery have ensued."

"But why did God permit the tempter to succeed?" asked the Martian. "He certainly could have prevented him."

"You do not understand," said the Priest. "God endowed this couple with freedom of will to choose between good and evil. He warned them that if they disobeyed Him they would die. When God came down from Heaven and saw that the man and his wife had chosen to disobey His commands, and to sin, He became angry and punished them by driving them out from their abode of happiness. He sentenced the man to toil and labour, and the woman to be subject to her husband and to bear children in pain and in travail. He further visited the punishment for their sin upon their children and all their descendants."

"You will understand, I hope," broke in the Modernist, "that this is not my view in the least. We Modernists believe that God is Benevolence and Justice, the Creative Spirit at the heart of the universe. We have long since

discarded as incredible this foolish folk-lore which, in their ignorance of natural science, our ancestors accepted as true."

"I so understand," remarked the Martian, "but the tale is curious and interesting and I would like to learn more of it."

He turned to the Priest:

"So these first parents died as a result of having committed this sin, as God warned. What became of their children—did God drive them out also?"

"Oh," answered the Priest, "they had no children then. The parents did not die until a number of years later."

"We all die sooner or later," remarked the Martian; "but do you mean that if this couple had not disobeyed they would have lived for ever?"

"We believe that is the meaning," said the Priest.

"Let me see if I understand," said the Martian. "The man and the woman disobeyed God, and God not only punished them for their transgression, but continues to punish their children and their countless descendants for the sin of these first parents. Is that it?"

"That is correct," said the Fundamentalist. "But God in His mercy promised that a Redeemer should be born free from this original sin, who would atone for this sin and thus save mankind."

"How could this original sin descend through all these generations?" asked the Martian.

"By inheritance," said the Fundamentalist. "No one was born that was not tainted by this original sin."

"I see," said the Martian. "It is a biological truth that traits of the parents are transmitted to their children. Now what was this original sin?"

"Disobedience, as we have told you. God had placed

## 10 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD

the original man and woman in a garden in which many trees were growing ; He forbade them to eat the fruit of a certain tree which would have made them wise and enabled them to distinguish between good and evil. They disobeyed Him and ate it. That was the original sin."

The Martian had listened carefully to the Fundamentalist's exposition.

" God did not want the human race to be wise or to know good from evil ? " he asked.

" He did not want His commands disobeyed," answered the Fundamentalist.

" And who planted the tree ? "

" God planted the tree."

" He knew when he planted it that they would eat of it ? "

" He gave them the right to choose."

" But God is omniscient, you say, so he must have known what would happen ? "

" Hmm ! Well—— Y-e-s, I—— Yes, He did."

" And he knew when he told them not to eat that they would disobey him ? "

" Why—eh—y-e-s, we suppose that must be true."

" Then he knew, when he first created them, that he was going to punish them and all their children and descendants ? Would you have done that to your children ? "

To the Fundamentalist's evident relief the Martian did not press for an answer, but continued :

" That was the sin, then, that went down through the ages to the descendants of the first pair and for which all these punishments have been visited ? "

" Yes, that was the sin."

" And did this redeemer, who you say was to atone for this sin and save the world, finally appear ? "

## THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD 11

"The Redeemer came and He was without sin," said the Priest.

"I deny that any Redeemer has yet come," interrupted the Rabbi.

"Oh, you do not agree on this," said the Martian, turning to the Rabbi. "I would like to hear the story nevertheless. You say he was without sin. How could that happen?"

"I will answer," said the Priest. "God manifested Himself as a kind, merciful, and loving Father, by giving His only begotten Son to the world so that whosoever should believe in Him would be saved. As you have been informed, no descendant of the original pair could be without sin; but by God's grace and through a miracle a maiden was immaculately conceived and born without the taint of sin. When she grew up she was visited by God Himself in the form of the Holy Spirit. She conceived by Him and bore without loss of virginity a son whose mother was thus an immaculate virgin and whose father was God. He therefore was born without sin. This child grew up and became the Saviour of the world. Although sinless He was put to death as a propitiation, and atoned to God for the sin of our first parents and of their countless descendants."

"Do I understand," said the Martian, "that God refused to forgive the original sin committed by your first ancestors until an innocent man was sacrificed to him, and that up to that time all those descended from the first parents were punished because their first parents' sin had not been atoned for?"

"Y-e-s, it must mean that," admitted the Priest.

"And you say that God is a just being?"

"We do say so," answered all the clerics together.

"Hmm!" said the Martian. "I must again ask your indulgence. I am endeavouring to apprehend your

## 12 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD

conception of God, and you will not mind, I am sure, if I try to grasp it by comparing him with an ordinary father. We will suppose that your son disobeyed you and you punished him for it; that you also visited the punishment upon his children, and upon all of his descendants until one of them, an entirely innocent man, was offered to you as a sacrifice; that you accepted this sacrifice, killed the innocent man, and thereupon became satisfied that the sin of your son was atoned for. Do I get the situation?"

"I do not like the way you put it," said the Priest.

"The analogy is right," broke in the Rabbi, "but I would like to make it clear that all this discussion of eternal punishment and atonement does not apply to *my* religion. We have never believed in eternal punishment, and deny that the Messiah has yet appeared. My religion and the Bible teach that when a nation departs from the ways of its fathers and ceases to walk in the ways of its God evil days will befall; but God does not condemn an individual to torture for his errors."

"And you must also understand," added the Modernist, "that we Modernists see God as the Eternal Love and Unfailing Mercy, and utterly reject these silly tales."

"I will bear this in mind," said the Martian. He turned to the Priest: "This innocent redeemer, you say, was the son of God and of an earthly maiden. He was then a demigod, was he?"

"He was God Himself," said the Priest. "He was begotten by the Holy Spirit, who was the father, through the Virgin Mary, and the child himself was the father and the child."

"I beg your pardon!" exclaimed the Martian in astonishment. "Did I understand you to say he was the son of God and was the father too? How could that

be? Surely he would not have been begotten by himself? "

" But He was," said the Priest; " He was begotten by Himself in the form of the Holy Spirit, and was born as the Son. We call them the Holy Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but they are only One."

The Martian shook his head. " I am afraid," he said, " it would be useless for me to try to comprehend how three can be one and one can be three."

" I can appreciate your difficulty," said the Priest, " for outside of my Church no adequate explanation has ever been given. Our theologians alone have been able to explain this apparent enigma, and I can assure you the explanation will satisfy you if you care to have it."

" A little later on I shall be greatly pleased to hear it, but will you tell me now how this saviour redeemed the world from this original sin? "

" As I have said," answered the Priest, " He was put to death as a sacrifice."

" You say," asked the Martian, " the son was sacrificed to the father, and the son was the father, and the father accepted the sacrifice of himself to himself. Is that it? "

" No, no," said the Priest. " While the three are one, they are at the same time three, so that it was the Son that was sacrificed to the Father. This sacrifice was accepted by the Father as an atonement for the sin of our first parents and their descendants, so that now those who believe in Him do not die but have everlasting life."

The Martian made a hopeless gesture. Then he asked .

" And when did this sacrifice occur? "

" About two thousand years ago," said the Priest.

" And have many believed in him? "

" Countless numbers have believed in Him through the ages, and still believe in Him."

## 14 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD

"And they are all alive and will live for ever?" asked the Martian.

"Oh, not on this earth," interposed the Fundamentalist. "Their bodies die and are buried, but their souls are taken to Heaven and have everlasting life there."

"Their souls. What is the soul?"

"The soul is the individual, the spirit," answered the Fundamentalist. "The body is only material. That returns to the dust from which it was made; but the soul is spiritual and not earthly. The body is merely a temporary dwelling-place for the soul. It leaves the body when the body dies, and returns to the Father. If it has believed in the Redeemer, it is saved and is admitted into Heaven, and has everlasting happiness."

"And if this soul is not saved what becomes of it?" asked the Martian.

"If it has not believed in the Redeemer it is doomed and hurled into the fiery pit where it writhes in torture for ever," replied the Fundamentalist.

"In torture *for ever*," repeated the Martian. "Did I hear you correctly?"

"For ever," answered the Fundamentalist.

"He is only partially correct," said the Priest; "the punishment need not be for eternity, even though the sin be mortal. God in His mercy is always ready to forgive a sinner if he sincerely repents before he dies. Nor does God admit a sinful soul to Heaven until it has been purged of its earthly sins, however venial they may be. In Purgatory these souls expiate, through suffering and torment, their earthly sins until they have been so cleansed and purified as to be worthy of admittance into the presence of God."

"And how long do they remain in torment in this Purgatory?" asked the Martian.



"That depends upon how sinful they have been," answered the Priest, "but through the prayers of their friends, and particularly through the intercession of the holy fathers of the true Church, their period of torment is lessened."

"Do I understand," asked the Martian, "that if a man of ordinary character should die his 'soul' would immediately be placed in torment for an indefinite period, to be purged of such slight sins as he may have committed?"

"That is correct," replied the Priest.

"And his loved ones who are still living would for ever be uncertain as to whether he were still writhing in torment?"

"True," said the Priest, "but they would see that prayers were frequently offered by the Church fathers to lessen the soul's suffering."

"Yes, by paying cash for them," interjected the Fundamentalist, spitefully.

"I can see," said the Martian, "that one who believed his loved ones' sufferings could be mitigated through your intervention would starve, wander homeless, and give everything he possessed in order to provide the necessary means to help them. Do I understand that, although your church fathers have the power to mitigate the sufferings of the departed souls, you withhold your power unless you receive compensation?"

"Certainly not," said the Priest. "That is a wicked calumny directed against us by those who seek to destroy the Holy Church of God. It is, of course, obvious that the Church fathers must be supported, otherwise they could not carry out God's will; but offerings are always freely made. Furthermore, free prayers are continually offered for souls in Purgatory."

"Purgatory is all nonsense!" exclaimed the Funda-

## 16 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD

mentalist. "It was first promulgated as a dogma by the Catholic Church in the fifteenth century in order to secure more revenues to the Church fathers, and the practice of selling indulgences was so abused that it was one of the principal causes for the establishment of the Protestant Church. Purgatory is not mentioned in the Bible, and has no place in the Christian religion. When a sinner dies he, with all unbelievers, is damned at once and will writhe in Hell for ever and ever."

The Martian's face was a study as he asked :

"And who decides whether this soul is to have everlasting happiness or everlasting torture? "

"The Redeemer," said the Fundamentalist, "who on Judgment Day will judge the quick and the dead."

"Do I understand," asked the Martian, "that this heavenly father, whom you call God, condemns his children to torture solely because they do not believe in him? "

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist. "To eternal torture; we are so taught."

"May I again use our analogy to an earthly father? If you had a son and he should refuse to believe you were a loving father who wished to save him, you would put him into your furnace and keep the furnace blazing as long as he lived; and if you both lived for ever you would keep him there all that time? "

"No, no; of course I would not."

"And yet you say your God is infinitely better than you. Oh, Earth-Man, what is this tale you are telling me about a loving father, who could give his children happiness but inflicts miseries upon them; who could make them strong and perfect but makes them weak and sinful; who could provide them with all that makes for happiness but inflicts untold miseries upon them during their life on earth; and who finally disposes of them by

causing them to endure terrible tortures through all eternity, for the sole reason that the minds with which he has endowed them cannot accept him as a loving, gentle, and merciful father? Where have you gathered this frightful misconception of a creator whom you characterize with such noble words as loving, tender, merciful, benevolent? "

The Modernist tried to conceal a smile; the Rabbi said nothing; but the indignation of the Fundamentalist and the Priest knew no bounds.

"Sir, this is blasphemy; you insult God; we cannot listen further to you." The Fundamentalist shook with emotion.

The Martian waved them to resume their seats. "My friends," he said, "let us talk quietly. You have said God is truth, and no amount of indignation nor injured feeling nor anger can alter truth. You consider me blasphemous in expressing my honest opinion of a being such as you have described. I am merely giving voice to my conception of God as you have described him. It is impossible for me to believe that such a being can exist and be considered good."

"Nevertheless, God is good, kind, and merciful, and that is why we worship Him and pray to Him," said the Fundamentalist.

"God is the Ideal Realizing Capacity in the universe," said the Modernist; "not the god they have described."

## CHAPTER III

### THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO PRAYER

"You say you pray to him?" asked the Martian. "By that I assume you ask him to grant your requests for something that might otherwise not occur?"

"Yes," answered the Fundamentalist. "We are told that if we have sufficient faith He will answer our prayers."

"But," replied the Martian, "you tell me God possesses infinite wisdom and knowledge. May I ask why you pray to him if all things are governed by his infinite wisdom?"

"You believe," remarked the Modernist, "that no prayer can be granted?"

"An all-powerful being such as has been described could undoubtedly vary or interrupt his own laws in order to grant a prayer," answered the Martian, "but I do not understand how, if those laws were established in the first instance by one perfect in his wisdom, such a being could break or change them without being unwise."

"Let me say," said the Modernist, "that formerly it was believed that God suspended His laws from time to time, permitting the accomplishment of what are called miracles. That idea was erroneous, and it is now generally accepted that the laws of Nature were established by God in the beginning and are unchangeable, and that nothing has ever occurred contrary to these laws."

"I take exception to that statement," said the

## THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO PRAYER 19

Fundamentalist. "God has performed miracles, and still performs them."

He turned to the Modernist: "You pray to Him yourself, and if you don't believe your prayers will be answered why do you pray?"

"We offer prayers of praise and thankfulness; we ask guidance and protection from harm; but we do not ask for the performance of miracles nor a change in His established laws."

"You accept the evidence of the immutability of his laws?" asked the Martian.

"Naturally."

"You assume, however, that as a being of infinite wisdom and understanding he is pleased with praise and adulation?"

"Why, no! But the soul can rise to its highest ideals through communion with the All-Pervading Spirit that is God."

"And you achieve this communion by addressing him with prayers of praise and thankfulness. You must, of course, assume he listens and hears you. Or do you sometimes yourself doubt if this All-Pervading Spirit, this Supreme Energy, this Power Beyond Authority, this Inconceivable Conception, this Ideal Realizing Capacity, hears you, appreciates your prayers of praise and gratitude, and directs the universe to your advantage?"

"We Modernists believe, as I have said, that the Supreme Intelligence created the universe and guides it through established laws, by which all things now existent, including man, were evolved to their present condition; that evolution is still at work and will always be at work until the final purpose is achieved. We do not ask for a change in these laws in order that a prayer may be granted, nor do we any longer endeavour to

## 20 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO PRAYER

propitiate Him in order to obtain better treatment than He accords others either in this world or in the next."

"We have never claimed," interjected the Priest, "that His laws were changeable, but we do believe that God is not bound by those laws and therefore was and is able to perform miracles apparently contrary to these laws, and does so."

"And why should not that be true?" added the Fundamentalist. "If God is all-powerful He certainly *can* perform miracles, and if He *can* perform them why should we not believe they *are* performed?"

"I cannot quite follow you," said the Martian. "We on Mars, through centuries of thought and research, have come to the conclusion that all Nature is governed by laws which are immutable."

"Our view," said the Modernist.

"May I ask *you* then," replied the Martian, "as you so believe, what do you conceive God has been doing since he first established those laws? Being omniscient, he must have foreseen in the beginning the result of their operation to the smallest detail throughout eternity, and must have known that all would proceed as he planned."

The Modernist made no answer.

"He is concerned with the smallest thing that happens," said the Priest. "The very hairs of your head are numbered."

"And not a sparrow falls without the knowledge of the Heavenly Father," added the Fundamentalist.

"But," pursued the Martian, "did not God prescribe in the beginning just how many hairs would cover your head, and the exact time and place that the sparrow would fall? Will you therefore explain to me why, after the establishment of perfect laws whose prescribed effects were bound to be in accordance with his divine plan, there was need for him to continue to exist?"

## THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO PRAYER 21

"God reigns in Heaven and rules the universe. He guides the stars and the planets in their courses. He constantly watches over us, and is always ready to listen to our prayers and grant them when in His wisdom He believes they should be granted," answered the Fundamentalist.

"Have you considered," asked the Martian, "the effect of the granting of a prayer? By way of example, suppose that a young married man, through natural causes, sickened and died; that his widow remarried and bore children; that the descendants of these children numbered amongst them scientists, inventors, and philanthropists who greatly advanced the world and the cause of civilization. All this must have been prescribed and foreseen by omniscient God. Now let us assume that because of a prayer granted by God the natural course of things were altered, that the dying man recovered; that after his recovery he begot children. In the course of time the descendants of these children would number thousands, not one of whom would ever have been born had not the prayer been granted. Assume that one of these descendants was a powerful monster whose crimes caused untold misery and suffering to hundreds of thousands of innocent people."

"Like Nero, for example," suggested the Modernist.

"I do not know of your Nero," said the Martian, "but you will note that this monster would be the indirect result of a granted prayer. Now I would like to inquire whom in such case you would consider responsible—the man who by his prayer induced God to produce this monster or God himself?"

"God would not grant such a prayer," said the Fundamentalist, "because He would know it would be unwise to do so. He would know what was best."

"Then you mean to imply," asked the Martian, "that

## 22 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO PRAYER

whenever he does grant a prayer he does so because, after hearing the prayer, he comes to the conclusion that his original plan was unwise? "

"The basic assumption is absurd," said the Modernist. "His laws are immutable and must operate in an orderly manner. The appearance of such a monster ensues through the laws of cause and effect."

"That is my view," said the Martian, "and it would follow, would it not, that God, if he granted a single prayer, would have to reconstruct his entire scheme for the future of your world and to map out a course not contemplated in the original plan? Conceive of all the changes to be adjusted throughout eternity, for I confess myself unable to imagine such a thing as a merely temporary effect of a single interruption of the laws of Nature."

"God is the cause of miracles because He performs them and He does answer our prayers," said the Fundamentalist.

"May I ask, did any one of you ever know of an answer to a prayer?" inquired the Martian.

"Many times," said the Priest. "I have observed many miraculous cures in answer to prayer. I have seen the lame throw away their crutches and walk unaided, the sick rise from their beds and recover health."

"And are you sure that their recovery was not in accordance with natural laws?" asked the Martian.

"Yes, I am sure of it," replied the Priest. "You yourself have spoken of cause and effect. These men were sick; doctors had been unable to cure them, and yet when a prayer was offered they recovered. Was not the prayer answered?"

"You are not familiar with *all* the laws of Nature, I presume?" asked the Martian.

"No, I am not."



## THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO PRAYER 23

"Nor with all the laws of Nature as they affect the mind's influence on the body?"

"I am not a psychologist."

"Then how are you able to state that these miraculous cures were not the effect of the operation of natural laws with which you are not familiar? May I illustrate what I mean? You have recently invented the radio. If you had seen it in operation without first having heard of it, would you have called it a miracle?"

"Very possibly I would," answered the Priest.

"And yet it is simply the application of one or two of Nature's laws. Perhaps you do not fully understand its working to-day, but you accept the statement of others that the laws by which it works are natural laws. Why?"

"Because," said the Modernist, "we know the scientists have discovered many heretofore unknown laws, and are applying them and producing these marvellous results."

"It is less difficult for your mind to believe these scientists than to consider the radio a miracle operating in defiance of Nature's laws?"

"Yes, that is so."

"Then why is it not more reasonable," said the Martian, turning to the Priest, "for you to believe that the cure of these people is due to natural laws of which you might be unaware than to believe that an all-wise being changes his perfect laws for the purpose of curing a disease which is itself the result of the operation of those laws?"

"Well, I know," said the Fundamentalist, "that if my son were suffering I would relieve his pain if I had the power. Isn't it reasonable to suppose that a Father infinitely more loving and powerful than I would do the same if in His wisdom He thought it best?"

## 24 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO PRAYER

"Nevertheless," replied the Martian, "if you had already provided for the best interests of your son, although it included the infliction of some suffering, would his prayers for relief cause you to act contrary to what you had already decided?"

"Certainly not."

"Then do you think there would be any use for your son to make such a request?"

"We are taught: 'Ask and it shall be given you'!"

"But are you not voicing a lack of confidence in God's wisdom and benevolence each time you pray to him to change his mind, in effect presumptuously saying to him, an all-wise father who has in his wisdom inflicted the suffering upon you: 'I think you are making a mistake'; are you not, in fact, actually insulting him by doubting his wisdom and his benevolence?"

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO SIN

"We have observed some of the miseries and suffering to which your people are subjected," remarked the Martian, after a pause. "We of course ascribe them to the operation of Nature's laws. If God controls these laws and is a loving father, why does he permit his children to suffer?"

"Sin is the cause of suffering," said the Priest; "God would not continue to inflict suffering if man would confess and truly repent of his sins."

"You interest me," said the Martian. "You say your suffering is due to sin. On Mars we have our accidents and catastrophes, which we endeavour to avoid by studying Nature's laws and guarding against their malevolent operation. Am I to understand that you believe these manifestations of Nature are due to your sins? I have just learned of a cyclone in a part of your planet where many little children were cruelly destroyed; of a storm at sea which wrecked one of your ships, throwing children into the water to be devoured by sharks. Is it your belief that the agonies these children endured were because of sins committed by them?"

"The sins of the fathers are visited on the children even to the third and fourth generation," said the Fundamentalist.

"And is this the reason for the suffering and death of these innocent children?" asked the Martian.

"It is God's will, and if it is God's will it must be right," said the Fundamentalist.

" Ah ! " exclaimed the Martian, " and in your administration of justice, if a father commits a crime, you punish his children also ? "

" Why, no. "

" You do not ? Then your ideas of justice do not coincide with those of God. "

" We know His purpose is good, " said the Fundamentalist, " because He is just and good. "

" Because you presume he is good you assume that when he inflicts his evils they really will result in ultimate benefit to the sufferer ? "

" Exactly ; that is just what we all believe. ' Whom He loveth He chasteneth. ' If God in His wisdom calls these children to Him, we know it is better that it should be so. ' Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him. ' We know He must have a good purpose when He inflicts suffering on the innocent, because otherwise He would not be the good God. "

" I agree with the last part of your statement, " said the Martian.

" Sometimes He sends suffering, " said the Priest, " in order to develop our characters. "

" But why should he choose to develop character through unmerited suffering ? "

" It is God's way, and God's ways are not our ways. "

" If that be so, " answered the Martian, " how can you know that your ideas of right and wrong coincide with those of God ; that when you act in accordance with your ideas of right you have his approval ? It must be assumed that his ways *are* your ways, and it seems to me that if God allows his innocent children to suffer he is either unable to relieve them, in which case he is not all-powerful, or he deliberately permits their suffering, in which case he can hardly be considered good. Yet you worship him. Are you afraid of him ? "

"We all fear the wrath of the Lord," said the Fundamentalist.

"His wrath?" queried the Martian. "Why should an all-good father become wroth?"

"He becomes wroth when we sin."

"But why should he be angry with you for the defects he himself implanted in you? I cannot get your point of view."

"That is because you do not appreciate God's loving-kindness," said the Fundamentalist. "He is good and merciful, and I will give you one of many instances to prove it. Last year I made a sea voyage to South Africa. A storm wrecked our ship and we had to take to the boats. Many of the boats were upset and a number of people were drowned. The boat I was in drifted for days. We ran short of water and provisions, and several of those aboard went mad and jumped into the sea. The rest of us, after untold hardships, finally landed upon a distant barren island. We fell upon our knees and thanked God for saving us. Several of the survivors died from exposure, but it was not long before a steamer appeared and brought us safely home. Does not that show Him to be a merciful God in sending that steamer to us?"

The Martian had listened with grave attention.

"You thanked God for saving you," he said. "And those who reached the island and afterwards died—they also thanked him for saving them?"

"All of them, yes."

"And this storm that caused all the trouble—was that under the control of God?"

"Of course! 'God rides upon the storm,'" answered the Fundamentalist.

"Did you blame him for causing the storm?"

"To have blamed Him would have been blasphemy.

## 28 THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO SIN

As the good and all-wise God He knows what is best for us."

"Did you try to save any of those who were shipwrecked with you?"

"I did everything in my power to save them."

"But you could not succeed, because God had made up his mind to kill them," observed the Martian.

"You put it in a strange way, sir."

"And you tried your best to thwart the will of God by keeping them alive?"

"Why, any good man would have tried to save their lives."

"Do you consider yourself as merciful as God?"

"No, indeed; He is infinitely more merciful."

"Again I do not understand. You would not have sent the storm; you would not have caused the suffering; you would have prevented it if you could; you would have saved the lives of these sufferers; but you say you are not so merciful as God, who would not permit you to succeed in these kind, merciful deeds."

The Martian remained thoughtful for a few moments, then continued: "Suppose I had the power to control the elements and should act as God acted in sending the storm that killed your comrades, would you consider me good and merciful?"

"Surely not; but you are a human being," answered the Fundamentalist.

"You believe God to be good and benevolent in spite of these terrible manifestations of evil and suffering wrought by him?"

"Yes, in spite of them. It is true that many times we cannot understand why things should be as they are; but we know He has some good purpose, and that He wishes us to develop and become more perfect," replied the Fundamentalist.

"But I do not see why he did not make his children perfect in the first place and cause them to be happy at once without putting them through a course of suffering and torture."

"That is just what He did do," exclaimed the Fundamentalist. "As we have told you, God originally made man perfect, but man sinned, and it is for that sin that he has suffered."

## CHAPTER V

### THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO GOD'S WORD

THE Martian again paused in thought. Then he inquired :

"Have your earthly fellow-men ever worshipped others whom they called 'God'?"

"Many false gods have been believed in and worshipped in the past," replied the Priest, "and many of them are still believed in and worshipped. But those who worship other than God worship a myth, something that does not exist. They are idolaters and pagans."

"How then can you be certain that your god<sup>1</sup> is the only true god?" asked the Martian.

"I will answer that," said the Fundamentalist. "God has revealed Himself to us in a Book written many years ago. It is called the Bible, and in this Book are set down His commands, His laws, and an account of the creation of the earth, your world, and the entire cosmos."

"Ah," said the Martian. "You have his actual word, in writing? You have his book?"

"Yes," said the Priest, "we have His Book. God, after descending to this earth and offering Himself as a

<sup>1</sup> The reader will note that up to this time the Martian has assumed that God is the name of a particular being, and therefore uses the capital "G." He now finds that the term "god" is a generic term, that there are many "gods," and henceforth, in order to distinguish which god he means when talking to the clerics he uses the term "your god" and no longer capitalizes. The clerics, not only treat "God" as a proper name, but in order to show their reverence they capitalize the pronoun relating to their God and also his "word," his "works," etc. The same distinction applies to the word "saviour."



sacrifice, designated one of His disciples to found His Church to administer His word. This disciple in turn transmitted this authority to a succession of holy men elected by an inspired vote. To these men He entrusted His written Word, so that all might receive His message as He gave it."

"That is not true," said the Fundamentalist. "His Church never had such authority, and but for the efforts of noble God-fearing men, God's blessed Word would have been destroyed or hidden away. The Book itself is His Word as He inspired it and needs no interpreter."

"Ambitious men," went on the Priest, "representing themselves to be the servants of God, have attempted to usurp the holy office of those whom God Himself appointed, and have themselves assumed to interpret His Word. It is because of this that confusion has arisen and many honest worshippers have been drawn away from His Holy Catholic Church and into sin."

"I deny that any part of that Book is inspired except the first part," said the Rabbi.

"And I maintain," said the Modernist, "that none of it is inspired; that many of its tales are allegories, and oftentimes pure myths borrowed from other religions; but we revere it for its lofty moral teaching and as a guide to right living."

"You appear to disagree," said the Martian, "not only as to its inspiration, but also as to how this book is to be interpreted. Does this book itself or any part of it disclose that it was inspired by your god?"

"God appeared many times to the holy men that wrote the various parts of the Book," answered the Priest.

"But is there anything in the book itself," asked the Martian, "to indicate that it was inspired by your god?"

"Not in the Book itself," replied the Priest; "but our records show that the men who fixed the canon and decided what was and what was not God's Word were guided by God Himself."

"I would like to hear about that," said the Martian; "but as you all appear to disagree as to how much of it is to be accepted, may I not see the book myself? Perhaps I might be able to form some judgment on that point."

"It is open to various interpretations," said the Priest. "We who have studied this Book for centuries should interpret it for you; otherwise you might not correctly grasp its meaning. Its interpretation, according to God's will, is left to His appointed representatives to the end that its true meaning may be imparted to all, and misunderstanding and confusion avoided."

"Do I understand," asked the Martian, "that when your god wrote this book he used language that needed interpretation?"

"God did not write the Book Himself," answered the Priest. "He inspired certain holy men to write it. Of course all language might be more or less ambiguous to minds not specially trained, and that is why we, to whom this task has been delegated by God Himself, prepare ourselves by intensive study to impart its true meaning to the world."

"That may be so," said the Martian, "but nevertheless if you have no objection I would much prefer to see this book for myself."

"Of course you should see it," said the Fundamentalist. "Here is a copy; read it for yourself."

"But that is not a true copy," said the Priest. "There are several portions left out."<sup>1</sup>

"My friends, you confuse me," said the Martian.

<sup>1</sup> The Apocrypha.

"You give me to understand that your religion is founded upon this book, and most of you agree that it was inspired by your god; then one of you says that the copy which the other follows is not complete, and that some of its parts are missing."

"But I insist," said the Fundamentalist, "that what he calls the missing parts are not the Word of God."

"I say they are both wrong," said the Rabbi; "only the first part of the Book is of any authority. It is the only inspired account, and my copy is in the original language."

"Oh, then," said the Martian to the Rabbi, "yours is not the original book, even though it is in the original language, and your copies," turning to the Priest and the Fundamentalist, "are translations."

"That is true," answered the Priest. "The original Book was in different languages, but was translated into our language by holy and inspired men."

"I am more than ever confounded," said the Martian. "May I not examine the original book? It seems to me that would avoid all dispute."

"That is unfortunately lost," answered the Priest, "but my copy was translated nearly sixteen hundred years ago from a copy of the original Book.<sup>1</sup> His book," pointing to the Fundamentalist, "was translated only about three hundred years ago, and not from the original, and it contains many errors of translation."<sup>2</sup>

"It seems amazing," said the Martian, "that your god should have permitted his original word to become lost. But were there other accounts of your god besides those that appear in the several versions you now possess?"

"There were many accounts, but they were spurious, and we do not include them," said the Priest.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Vulgate, translated by Jerome into Latin.

<sup>2</sup> King James's Version. <sup>3</sup> Apocrypha of the New Testament.

"How do you know they were spurious?"

"Because God told us which were spurious and which were not."

"Ah, that is important," said the Martian; "and when and how was that, may I ask?"

"Why, you see," answered the Priest, "we hold various councils of holy men, and these holy men, under the guidance of God, decide questions that arise from time to time. In the early days of our religion it was necessary to reject those accounts that were not genuine, and to fix the canon. This was especially the case in connection with the story of our Saviour. The holy men of the council received inspiration from God that but four accounts were genuine, and so they now appear in our Bible. God spoke to us in that way."

"Oh," broke in the Modernist petulantly, "why not be honest about it? We know those four gospels were selected because they were the ones respectively used by the four leading Churches of that day—Matthew at Jerusalem, Mark at Rome, Luke at Antioch, and John at Ephesus.<sup>1</sup> None of these Churches was willing to give up its particular gospel account, and so the council canonized them all. That's why the accounts disagree."

The Priest ignored the interruption, and continued; "Later, when the inclusion of other parts of the Book was in question, the holy men of the council were again guided by God and decided which were true and which were not, and so we got our Bible."

"I deny that the men of this council were inspired," said the Fundamentalist, "for, as I have said before, there are included in his Bible certain parts that we know were not inspired. The holy men that fixed the

<sup>1</sup> *A Short History of Christianity* (Reinach), p. 5, translated by Florence Simmonds (Putnam, 1922).

canon of *our* Bible were inspired and they rejected those unauthorized parts."

"I repeat," said the Modernist, "that they are both wrong; that none of it is inspired, for not only did St. Augustine and Eusebius, two of the fathers of the Church represented by our friend the Priest, reject certain parts which are now included in his Bible, but Martin Luther, who founded the Church of our friend the Fundamentalist, also rejected portions which are now found in the Fundamentalist's Bible."<sup>1</sup>

"Well," said the Martian, "at any rate you all appear to agree that this book, or at least part of it, is the foundation of the religion of all of you and relates to the same god. Your main difference of opinion appears to be as to the inclusion of certain passages."

"Yes," said the Rabbi, "the whole of the second part of the Book should be rejected and have no place in describing the character or actions of God."

"Since you cannot agree as to the entire book," said the Martian, "suppose we confine our discussion at present to that part as to which the majority of you are in accord."

"It is well," said the Priest.

"Then," said the Martian to the Rabbi, "may I have your copy as being in the original language?"

<sup>1</sup> Revelation, Hebrews, James, Jude.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE MARTIAN EXAMINES THE OLD TESTAMENT

THE Martian went quickly through the pages of the Old Testament handed him by the Rabbi, and his face assumed a mystified expression. "Did I understand you gentlemen to say that this is the word of your god, and that he inspired its writing?"

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist.

The Modernist started to speak, but checked himself.

"But I do not understand," said the Martian. "I find here an account of the creation of the world. Am I to assume that this is a true account?"

"Absolutely," said the Fundamentalist, the Priest, and the Rabbi.

"Gentlemen," said the Martian, "I hesitate to disagree with you; yet what I see here cannot be true. I notice an account of the creation of your first ancestor, who, it appears, was made from the dust of the ground, just after your world came into being. It gives his age, how old he was when his eldest child was born, and the ages of his descendants. By a little calculation it would appear that according to this account the age of our universe is a little under six thousand years. How can that be when we Martians know our world and yours are millions of years old?"

"Nevertheless, every word there is true," said the Fundamentalist.

"Then I see this book indicates that your world is flat.

We Martians, and you too, know that it is round. It tells of the creation of the stars after the creation of your world, while we know that there are stars millions of years older than our own planet, which is older than yours."

"The Bible is true," said the Fundamentalist.

"It is axiomatic with us," continued the Martian, "that of two diametrically opposed statements one must be untrue. Reading the book from this standpoint, I am exceedingly perplexed over the many contradictions I find, in view of your reiterated statements that every word is true as inspired by your god. May I indicate some of these contradictions?"

"Why, of course," said the Rabbi. "But I am sure that what you might consider contradictions are readily reconcilable."

"With your permission then," said the Martian, "I will point out some of them, although I see what are to me so many that I cannot mention them all. In the very beginning of the book there is an account of the creation of the earth and its inhabitants. There it is said that the earth was at first without form, and 'the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.'<sup>1</sup> In the second chapter the earth is represented as being first a dry plain lacking even moisture."<sup>2</sup>

"There is an explanation," said the Priest.

The Martian continued: "According to the first account, the birds came out of the water,<sup>3</sup> but in the second account they are said to have come out of the ground."<sup>4</sup>

"Both statements are true or they would not be in God's Book," said the Fundamentalist.

"The first account says the trees were made on the third day and that man was formed three days later."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gen. i. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. i. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. i. 11, 27.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. ii. 5, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. ii. 19.

The second account says that man was made before the trees.<sup>1</sup> The first account relates that the man and the woman were made at the same time;<sup>2</sup> the second account says that the woman was made after the man."<sup>3</sup>

"They represent different view-points of the inspired writers," said the Fundamentalist, goaded into an attempted explanation. "If we had a full understanding of all the conditions of life and the circumstances under which the several narratives in the Bible were recorded, we would find that many of these seeming difficulties would disappear."

The Martian went on: "In the seventh chapter of Genesis it appears that a man named Noah was commanded to take into a vessel called the Ark seven males and seven females of all clean beasts, and that he did so.<sup>4</sup> Later it is said that only two of the clean beasts were taken into the ark."<sup>5</sup>

The Fundamentalist replied:

"Those of us who hold to the infallibility of the Bible believe that the original manuscripts were absolutely accurate. No man would question the possibility of the slipping in of minor errors, through copyists, and it seems evident that God may have even permitted some such difficulties to enter, to hold the interest of the world in the Book through all ages, and in order to challenge and stimulate faith."

"I see," said the Martian as he continued to turn the pages. "Here I notice in regard to one Abraham it states that he had a wife named Keturah,<sup>6</sup> but later it says she was only his concubine;<sup>7</sup> that in one place it states he had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael,<sup>8</sup> while in another place it says Isaac was his only son."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gen. ii. 7, 9.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. i. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Gen. ii. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Gen. vii. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. vii. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Gen. xxv. 1.

<sup>7</sup> 1 Chron. i. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Gen. xvi. 15; xxi. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Heb. xi. 17.



"But Isaac was Abraham's son by Sara his wife; that is what is meant," said the Priest.

"Let us go on," said the Martian. "I find your god is reported to have said, 'Thou canst not see my face; there shall no man see me and live,'<sup>1</sup> but I notice that one named Jacob said, 'I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved.'<sup>2</sup> I notice also that certain men named Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and several of the leaders saw the god of Israel, for it says, 'They saw God and did eat and drink.'<sup>3</sup>

"Will you permit me to say," said the Priest, "that we have long been cognizant of these apparent contradictions? Our holy men have noted and studied them in connection with other ancient writings, and I can assure you there is not a seeming discrepancy such as those you are pointing out that has not been satisfactorily and logically reconciled."

"I thank you for the explanation, but I would like to mention some others," said the Martian. "I find it reported that your god repented of the evil he had said he would do unto some of your people, and he did it not.<sup>4</sup> Yet you say he is unchangeable."

"You do not get the real meaning of that," said the Rabbi.

The Martian proceeded: "I understood you to assert that your god is everywhere at once, but I find that in connection with two cities, named Sodom and Gomorrah, he said: 'Because their sin is very grievous I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto me; and if not I will know.'<sup>5</sup>

"That is a figure of speech," said the Rabbi.

"You tell me," continued the Martian, "he is merciful

<sup>1</sup> Ex. xxxiii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. xxxii. 30.

<sup>3</sup> Exod. xxiv. 9, 10, 11.

<sup>4</sup> Jonah iii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Gen. xviii. 20, 21.

and that his mercy endures for ever; but I find he is reported to have given this command: 'Now go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.' " <sup>1</sup>

"But they were the enemies of Israel," said the Rabbi.

"So I understand," said the Martian. He continued: "I find it said, 'His anger endureth but a moment,' <sup>2</sup> but in another place it says, 'Ye have kindled a fire in mine anger which shall burn for ever.' " <sup>3</sup>

"It is a matter of interpretation," said the Priest.

"Here," said the Martian, "I find it said that 'God is not a man that he should lie,' <sup>4</sup> but in another place it is said, 'Now therefore behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit into the mouth of all these thy prophets and the Lord has spoken evil concerning thee.' " <sup>5</sup>

"You misunderstand these passages," said the Priest. "I would like to repeat that every apparent discrepancy has been satisfactorily cleared by our trained theologians."

"May I inquire as to this passage?" asked the Martian. "I find it said here that a king named Baasha died and was succeeded by his son Elah in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of King Asa; <sup>6</sup> but in another place it says that in the thirty-sixth year of King Asa, Baasha came up against Judah. <sup>7</sup> Now that was ten years after his death according to the first account."

"That has been explained," said the Priest.

"It is all true because it is God's Word," broke in the Fundamentalist. "Besides, if everything in the Bible were absolutely plain and simple, we would have

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. xv. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Num. xxiii. 19.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings xvi. 6. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ps. xxx. 5.

<sup>5</sup> 1 Kings xxii. 23.

<sup>7</sup> 2 Chron. xvi. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Jer. xvii. 4.

no need for faith in connection with it, but would walk by sight and not by faith."

"I will bear that in mind," replied the Martian. "For the present I have several other things to ask in regard to this book. You have repeatedly assured me that your god is good, merciful, and just."

"We all agree on that," said the Priest. The rest nodded assent.

"Yet I find that he confesses that he is a jealous god, that he is a vengeful god. I find him——"

"Let me explain," interrupted the Modernist. "We know that the god as painted in the Old Testament never existed. We up-to-date Christians have an entirely different conception of God."

"You don't believe this part of the book to be inspired?"

"Certainly not," answered the Modernist. "We have outgrown that idea."

"But you must admit," said the Rabbi, addressing the Martian, "that you find many noble sentiments throughout the Book, and exhortations on the part of those good men, the prophets as we call them, to practise good works, to be generous, kindly, merciful, honest, and truthful."

"Yes, I do notice that," said the Martian, "and they appear to credit these good, kindly, and noble sentiments to their god. But, whereas I find that they speak of this god as kind, good, and merciful, nevertheless, wherever he himself appears on the scene or his ways become manifest he shows himself to be just the contrary. He is said to be truth-loving, and I find him practising deception and lying.<sup>1</sup> He is said to be against stealing, yet he encourages your people to steal the jewels of the people amongst whom they lived;<sup>2</sup> to steal the land of others

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings xxii. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. iii. 21, 22.

who have done no wrong. He is said to be against murder, against adultery, and yet he orders and encourages wholesale murders and adultery, rape, and pillage.<sup>1</sup> He is said to be just, and he punishes children for the sins of their fathers,<sup>2</sup> and hardens the heart of a king and then punishes him because of it.<sup>3</sup> He is said to be merciful, but I find him commending the slaying of innocent women and children.<sup>4</sup> In fact, accepting the evidence of this book, I cannot find him otherwise than a jealous, cruel, vindictive, vengeful, merciless monster, who is the exemplar and abettor of all sorts of deeds which we Martians consider evil. If your standard be the same as ours, how can you say these men who preached goodness are preaching it because of their god's example? "

"You are right," said the Modernist. "That is why we, who have looked at this book from a sensible point of view, do not accept it as inspired, but as a human document written by men who reflect the spirit of the times in which they lived, and who painted their god in accordance with the views of those times."

"I deny that," said the Fundamentalist, "and I wish you would tell me, if these prophets did not get their ideas of right from God, where did they get them? "

"Oh, that is easily explained," replied the Modernist. "There were many moral and ethical men living long before the Bible was written, whose codes were equally as high as, and I am willing to admit in some respects higher than, the code of the Old Testament."

<sup>1</sup> Exod. xxxii. 27; 2 Kings x. 11; Num. xxxi. 1-54.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xx. 5. <sup>3</sup> Exod. ix. 12, 23-26. <sup>4</sup> Num. xxxi. 1-54.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE MARTIAN EXAMINES THE NEW TESTAMENT

"MAY I see the second part of your Bible?" asked the Martian, as he handed the Old Testament back to the Rabbi.

The Fundamentalist handed him his Bible and pointed out where the New Testament began. The Martian turned the pages.

"I notice," he said, "that this part of the book makes repeated references to the old part. It does not reject the old part then?"

"No," said the Priest, "it tells of the same God, but in this part of the Book you will read the story of how He sacrificed Himself and brought salvation to us."

"Oh, this," said the Martian, "is an account of the saviour about whom you spoke earlier?"

"Yes," said the Modernist, "and it is on the actions and the teachings of this perfect man that we have founded our religion, the Christian religion as it is called. When you come to examine the philosophy and precepts of the New Testament, you will find that we are justified in accepting them as the teachings of a great and good man whose followers we are. We do not believe that he was the son of God except as we are all sons of God; but we believe he was endowed with the Godlike spirit, and as followers of his precepts we call ourselves Christians and our religion Christianity."

"The Modernist is not a Christian," said the Priest.

"Oh, yes, I am," replied the Modernist, "for I follow the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, who is called the Christ."

"Christ?" echoed the Martian. "I take it you get your word Christian from that. Was this man named Christ?"

"Oh, no," said the Modernist; "Christ is from a Greek word which means the Anointed. It is the same as the Hebrew word 'Messiah,' which means the Anointed of God. When he lived he was known as Joshua ben Joseph, but he is known to us by the Greek form of Joshua—that is, Jesus."

"And it is the story of this god-man that I find in the second part of this book?"

"That is correct," said the Priest.

"I would like to examine it," said the Martian. "Still, if he is the same god as described in your Old Testament and is unchanging, I cannot understand how he can be different in one part of the book from what he is in the other, especially as you say the entire book was inspired by him."

"He is the same God and He is not different," said the Fundamentalist. "'He is the same yesterday and to-day, and for ever.'"

"Your statements are puzzling," said the Martian, "but perhaps an examination of the second part of the book will make the matter clear to me."

"You have the Book," said the Fundamentalist, "and I repeat that everything in that Book is true, the first part as well as the last part, and that it does not matter to me what you may pick out. God, who inspired that Book, is a just, merciful, and loving Father to us all."

The Martian gazed at the Fundamentalist with a curious expression, then glanced through the book. "I

see that this part of your Bible opens with accounts of the life of the man called Jesus."

"Yes, He is our Saviour, Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, the Christ, and the Redeemer," said the Priest.

The Martian continued his examination of the book. "There are four accounts, I notice."

"They are the Gospels; they were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John."

The Modernist shook his head.

"You doubt that statement?" asked the Martian.

"I do not agree with my friend that they were written by these disciples."

"Why do you doubt that?" asked the Martian.

"Because we have investigated the origin of these books," replied the Modernist, "and we find from statements contained in them that they could not have been written by men who were contemporary with Jesus. For example, if you examine them you will find that, while they relate many of the same episodes, they describe a number of them as taking place under different circumstances and in different places. If we critically study these accounts, we find that they were written long after the events they describe, from traditions which were handed down.<sup>1</sup> They contradict each other so much that it is plain they cannot all be true and could not have been written by men who saw the things they described."

"He is wrong," said the Fundamentalist. "These books were written by those inspired men and they are all four true."

The Martian thumbed over the pages. "I do find strange contradictions here. You say they all refer to the same man?"

"Yes," said the Priest. "They all tell of the coming

<sup>1</sup> *A Short History of Christianity* (Reinach).

of the Lord Jesus Christ and of His life, of His works, and of His death."

"I am interested in the genealogy of your God-man," said the Martian. "This genealogy, as given in the first chapter of the account according to Matthew, goes back through the father and grandfather and so on, through *Solomon* to David.<sup>1</sup> When I turn to the Gospel according to Luke I find his ancestry is traced through *Nathan* to David.<sup>2</sup> Were Solomon and Nathan the same man?"

"Nathan was the brother of Solomon," said the Modernist.

The Martian continued: "It would appear from these genealogies that according to Matthew Joseph's father was Jacob, and according to Luke he was Heli; according to Matthew his grandfather was Matthan, and according to Luke Matthal. These two might be the same name mis-spelled, but *his* father according to Matthew was Eleazer, and according to Luke was Levi. Then the names after that are practically all different until we come to David. I note your Christ had twenty-six intervening ancestors according to Matthew, and forty-one according to Luke. Do you say these are both true?"

"Yes, we do," said the Fundamentalist and the Priest.

"No, I do not," said the Modernist.

"I merely seek information," said the Martian. "I find that in your book Matthew, it is said your saviour god was born in the days of Herod the King,<sup>3</sup> while your Luke narrator says he was born when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.<sup>4</sup> Did these two men reign at the same time?"

"No," said the Modernist. "History tells us that

<sup>1</sup> Matt. i. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. ii. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Luke iii. 23-31.

<sup>4</sup> Luke ii. 2-7.



Cyrenius was not governor of Syria until some years after the time of Herod."

"I observe," said the Martian, "that according to Matthew the young child and his mother were taken to Egypt and were there until the death of Herod;<sup>1</sup> that when Herod died Joseph arose and took the young child and his mother and came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth."

"That is true," said the Fundamentalist.

"But I find in Luke<sup>2</sup> that when the days of his mother's purification were accomplished they brought the child to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, and when they had performed all these things they returned to their own city of Nazareth. I cannot understand how he could be in Egypt and in Nazareth at the same time."

"We have the explanation," said the Priest.

"Then I notice," said the Martian, "that, according to an account in the first chapter of Mark, immediately after Jesus was baptized he went into the wilderness and was there for forty days.<sup>3</sup> In the Gospel according to John it says that the third day after his baptism there was a marriage at Cana of Galilee, and he was called with his disciples to the marriage.<sup>4</sup> Was Galilee in the wilderness?"

"No," answered the Modernist, "it was not."

"Here it states in Matthew," continued the Martian, "that he preached a sermon on a *mountain* to his *disciples*;<sup>5</sup> in Luke it says he stood in the *plains* and delivered this sermon to a *great multitude of people*."<sup>6</sup>

"Both accounts are true," said the Fundamentalist. "The mere fact that we cannot understand all that is in the Bible or fathom its mysteries has kept it as the centre

<sup>1</sup> Matt. ii. 14-23.

<sup>3</sup> Mark i. 12, 13.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. v. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Luke ii. 22.

<sup>4</sup> John ii. 1, 2.

<sup>6</sup> Luke vi. 17.

of interest and devotion generation after generation. If, therefore, at this hour I had it in my power to clear up every mystery connected with it, I would leave it absolutely untouched, for the wisdom of God has planned it as it is, and it is sufficient for me."

"I am afraid it is not quite so for me," remarked the Martian with a smile. He resumed:

"In Mark I find that your saviour was crucified at the third hour of the day,<sup>1</sup> while in John his crucifixion is said to have occurred about the sixth hour.<sup>2</sup>

"Reading further," continued the Martian, "I note that your saviour was betrayed by one of his disciples named Judas, who was paid thirty pieces of silver for the betrayal. I read in Matthew that he brought these thirty pieces back to the chief priests,<sup>3</sup> but later on in this book it says he purchased a field with the reward of his iniquity."

"Then I find," went on the Martian, "that according to Matthew he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple and went and hanged himself;<sup>4</sup> but in the first chapter of the Acts it says he fell headlong and burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out."<sup>5</sup>

"The accounts have all been carefully studied by our theologians," said the Priest, "and have been found not to conflict in any way. It is only my Church, as the only true Church of God, that has, by divine guidance, been able to interpret correctly what might appear to be conflicting accounts here and there throughout His Holy Word."

"That is not true," retorted the Fundamentalist. "A full view of Christ and His teachings can be obtained only by taking the four Gospel accounts together, as Matthew views Christ from the standpoint of a king,

<sup>1</sup> Mark xv. 25.

<sup>2</sup> John xix. 14, 18.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxvii. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxvii. 5.

<sup>5</sup> Acts i. 18.

Mark from the standpoint of a servant, Luke from the standpoint of the Son of Man, and John from the standpoint of the Son of God. That is why they intentionally differ."

"I think I understand," said the Martian, "and perhaps I need seek no further."

"But I want you to note," said the Modernist, who had listened impatiently, "the moral sentiments and the wonderful teachings of the man Jesus. I disagree with my friends here. I know there are many contradictions in the New Testament as well as in the Old, and that the statements cannot all be true. Nevertheless, I would ask where could you find precepts of a higher order, a nobler code of ethics? And so I say it is immaterial whether or not the Bible is historically true. We have here the philosophy of a great and good teacher. Whether these precepts be those of the man to whom we ascribe them or emanate from others, they are worthy of being followed. We Modernists are therefore more concerned with the principles of Christianity than with unimportant discrepancies of narration. This is why we call ourselves Christians and call Christianity our religion."

"Your religion then is a philosophy of life?" asked the Martian.

"I presume you might call it that," answered the Modernist, "for we do not believe in the virgin birth nor in the miracles said to have been performed by Jesus, except possibly in a figurative sense. His example as a teacher and his character as portrayed are our models."

"And is it your contention that it is to the precepts and characterizations contained in this book that you must look in order to live a just and upright life?"

"It is our contention that in Christianity alone can be found the true philosophy of life," said the Modernist.

## 50 MARTIAN EXAMINES NEW TESTAMENT

"Then suppose we examine this life of Jesus as that of one who should be our model," said the Martian.

"Yes," said the Modernist, "examine into his life and you will see how noble he was and how one should emulate him as closely as possible."

"Are there other books that I may consult in forming an idea of his character?" asked the Martian.

"No, I am sorry to say he is not mentioned in any authentic ancient literature outside the Bible."

"Am I to understand," asked the Martian, "that no contemporary historians or writers deemed it of sufficient importance to mention this wonderful occurrence, this amazing appearance of a god upon your planet?"

"You are correct in your understanding," replied the Modernist.

"Then we must form our judgment from the Bible alone?"

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist, "but you will find more than enough to convince you of His ineffable goodness and sublimity which we cannot hope to approach. He teaches charity, benevolence, and self-sacrifice; to despise the needs of this world, and think only of the Heaven wherein our souls will have everlasting life."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE MARTIAN EXAMINES THE CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN SAVIOUR

"His philosophy has some strange elements," said the Martian, "and I would like to consider them in detail. May I further examine your New Testament in order that I might understand the character of your god and saviour as he appears there? "

"You will find we have not misled you," said the Modernist. "As I have said," he added, "many of us do not believe in the divinity of Jesus, but we accept him as a great and good teacher."

"But you are Christians?" asked the Martian.

"Yes, we are Christians because we endeavour to follow the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth."

"We deny they are Christians," said the Fundamentalist, "for no one can be a Christian unless he believes that Jesus is the Son of God and is God, and that the Bible is His inspired Word."

"I gather," said the Martian, "your difference is in the meaning of the word Christian. Our Modernist friend believes it means to follow the teachings of him whom you call Jesus, while you believe it means that you must also accept him as your god, begotten by himself, and in this way of divine birth."

"I think that expresses the main difference," said the Modernist.

The Martian spent some time turning the pages. "Your saviour's character as evidenced by his words

and actions seems to me strangely inconsistent. I find him to be at times gentle and forgiving, while at other times he manifests traits of character which to my mind are not in keeping with a kind and loving person."

"I challenge that statement," said the Priest.

"And I also," said the Fundamentalist.

"May I point out my difficulty?" said the Martian. "He gives voice to sentiments and to rules of conduct many of which, while they seem to me to be utterly impracticable and, if I may say so, foolish, nevertheless evince a profound love for mankind; a sweet gentleness and a tenderness that are most appealing. On the other hand, in many of his sayings and actions he appears irascible, unforgiving, and merciless towards those who disagree with him. For example, I find him foolishly and angrily cursing a fig tree because it does not bear fruit out of season;<sup>1</sup> I find him vituperative towards your fellow-men, exclaiming, 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?' "<sup>2</sup>

"Those were the Pharisees," said the Fundamentalist, "who were His enemies."

"So it would appear," said the Martian. "Then he says: 'If any man come unto me and hate not his father and mother and wife and child and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.'<sup>3</sup> Does that mean that you, as his followers, all hate your wives and children and father and mother?"

"Oh, you have misread that," said the Fundamentalist. "It does not mean that."

"It is a mistranslation?" asked the Martian.

"No, but you have misinterpreted the language," said the Priest.

"Nevertheless, it seems to agree with his further

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxi. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxiii. 33.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xiv. 26.

statement, ' Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you Nay; but rather division; . . . the father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother.' " <sup>1</sup>

" He came to establish peace and goodwill on earth," said the Fundamentalist.

" It would hardly appear so," replied the Martian. " Besides, he himself states that he comes not to send peace, but a sword." <sup>2</sup>

" That means the sword of justice," said the Priest. " He taught us even to love our enemies."

" Apropos of that," said the Martian, " I find this statement: ' These mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.' " <sup>3</sup>

" He wanted to save everyone if they would only believe in Him," said the Fundamentalist.

" Yes, that seems to be the condition there laid down," said the Martian. " And yet it appears he spoke in parables so that ' Seeing they may see and not perceive; and hearing, they may hear and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted and their sins should be forgiven them.' " <sup>4</sup>

" You do not get the correct meaning of that passage," said the Fundamentalist.

" Possibly not," replied the Martian, " although it seems to accord with this passage addressed to his disciples: ' And whomsoever shall not receive you nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.' " <sup>5</sup>

" He was referring there to the obstinate who refused to receive His Word," said the Fundamentalist.

<sup>1</sup> Luke xii. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. x. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xix. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Mark iv. 12; Luke viii. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Matt. x. 14.

"But I find that he himself stated in Matthew: 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel, . . . it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs;' <sup>1</sup> and instructs his disciples to 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' <sup>2</sup> In John he says: 'Salvation is of the Jews.' <sup>3</sup> These passages clearly indicate to me that he was concerned in saving only his own people, the Jews. Am I mistaken as to that?" asked the Martian.

"You certainly are mistaken about that," said the Priest. "He came to save all sinners."

"I should not so interpret those passages," remarked the Martian. He went on:

"I understand, then, that all who believe in him shall be saved, but those who do not believe in him shall not be saved?"

"Exactly," said the Priest. "You will find in Mark the statement that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." <sup>4</sup>

"And by damned you mean——"

"Sent to Hell," said the Fundamentalist.

"That Hell that you have described to me with its eternal tortures?"

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist. "The unbelievers shall writhe in Hell for ever."

"Yes, I see," said the Martian; "that would seem to be the meaning of this passage in Revelation: 'He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb;' <sup>5</sup> of the words in Matthew: 'And shall cast

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xv. 24, 26.      <sup>2</sup> Matt. x. 5, 6.      <sup>3</sup> John iv. 22.

<sup>4</sup> Mark xvi. 16.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. xiv. 10.



them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth;' <sup>1</sup> also of his remark, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' <sup>2</sup> And you say that your saviour taught these sentiments? "

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist, "for He is a just God."

"And that this is your god? "

"Yes, a most merciful and loving God."

"Who condemns anyone to Hell who does not believe in him? "

"Yes, the penalty of sin."

"Your god would punish the sin of unbelief by eternal tortures in fire? "

"Yes, it is so written as He said and taught it."

"I cannot refrain from remarking," said the Martian, "that I do not find anything quite so bad as this in your Old Testament. Your god is there portrayed as committing and sanctioning all manner of earthly crimes; but I do not see anywhere that he would send his children to eternal torture merely for not believing what their minds, which he gave them, were unable to accept as true."

"But he will save them if they believe in Him," said the Fundamentalist.

"And that is the god of the New Testament," continued the Martian, waving aside the interruption, "who, you say, is kind, loving, meek, and gentle. Judging by Martian standards, we would consider him a thousand times worse than your old god."

"He offers each one a chance to repent," said the Priest.

"Repent? Repent of what? " asked the Martian.

"Of using the mind which your god himself gave him? "

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xiii. 42.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xxv. 41.

How can one repent if his mind is unable to accept what his reason tells him cannot be? Can you force yourself to believe the sun is not shining when you see its light? "

" But do you not note also the noble words he speaks? " asked the Modernist.

" I have observed them, and his many kind actions, his sympathy and help for the unfortunate. Nevertheless, on our planet we judge a man by all that he does and says, and as we have no gods I can judge him only by our standard. Your god is willing to save those that believe in him, but condemns those that fail in this respect, and might fairly be said to gloat over the prospective eternal torture of those who reject him. I cannot conceive of a father who would eternally torture any of his children that do not accept his teachings as infallible; nor of any father who could sit quietly in his home or elsewhere and know that some of his children were suffering horrible torments. No, no; no man could be so cold, unmerciful, and cruel as your saviour appears from his actions as a god. You say he is your god himself, although your god's son (a statement I do not understand) and therefore able to save his children; yet he is bloodthirsty enough to condemn them for the mere inability to believe. Such a character makes one shudder with horror."

The Fundamentalist gazed at the Martian as if stupefied.

" Nevertheless," said the Priest, " we believe in Him as the Supreme Ruler to whom we must bow down."

" But is it not only through fear, and that a childish fear? A slave bows to his master through fear, a vassal to a king through fear; you earthly men to this supposed supreme ruler through fear, for it cannot be through love."

"I love Jesus with all my heart and with all my soul," exclaimed the Fundamentalist; "that is why I kneel to Him."

"But you must concede," said the Modernist, "that as a man and as a teacher of right living He cannot be surpassed; and you must remember that we Modernists look upon Him only as a man."

"If I may be permitted to sum up the character of your saviour," answered the Martian, "it would seem to me that as a man he would undoubtedly pass muster as a good man; for while he is shown as being contemptuous to his mother,<sup>1</sup> and at times bad-tempered, vindictive, intolerant, and spiteful, nevertheless his chief characteristics are gentleness, sympathy, and love towards the unfortunate. In other words, viewing him as a human being, we might say he had his faults, but showed high moral traits. As a god he is cruel, merciless, and unjust."

The Fundamentalist could no longer restrain himself. He leaped to his feet, pale with anger, and appeared ready to flee from the room. He cast a startled look about him as if he feared some manifestation of his god's wrath. He controlled himself with difficulty as he addressed the Martian:

"Sir, I must beg of you to refrain from such wicked and sinful blasphemy!"

The Martian remained calm. "Pardon me; I meant no offence. I cannot, however, give any other interpretation to the words I find in your Bible itself. I am unacquainted with your modes of thought, but it seems that whenever I refer to anything in your Bible that is favourable to your god you permit me to adopt its natural meaning. When, however, I point to something that in the slightest degree reflects discreditably

<sup>1</sup> John ii. 4.

upon your religion or your god you insist I must either ignore it, or attach to it a meaning that its words will not bear out. Possibly I should not express myself so frankly."

"But as a teacher," asked the Modernist, "you must find his precepts noble and sublime?"

"His philosophy of life, aside from certain sound moral precepts apparently borrowed from others, is impracticable, foolish, and ignorant, for it teaches as its grand theme—the very essence of his philosophy—a contempt for this life in the hope of a reward in a visionary future of the existence of which you have not yet shown me a particle of evidence. You will recall his precepts, to 'take no heed for the morrow, but put your faith in God'; not to store up riches, but to give everything away and trust to him to provide food and raiment; to consider the lilies of the field which toil not. In other words, to do absolutely nothing to better your condition on this earth. Such a philosophy demands inertia and stagnation. He even inveighs against joyousness, exclaiming, 'Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep.'"<sup>1</sup>

"And He is right," said the Fundamentalist, who had somewhat recovered from his anger. "What matters the short space of life on earth compared to our eternity of happiness in His presence? What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

"He taught meekness and humility," said the Priest, "because it is by those traits that we reach Heaven, the blessed goal."

"As a matter of fact," commented the Martian,

<sup>1</sup> Luke vi. 25.

## CHARACTER OF THE CHRISTIAN SAVIOUR 59

“ you do not obey the teachings, for your whole system of jurisprudence and of economics, and the general conduct of your lives is contrary to your professed religion, and must be so if you would continue to progress or to find any joy in life.”

## CHAPTER IX

### THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO EVERLASTING LIFE

"WILL you tell me now something more about this everlasting life to which you have referred?" asked the Martian. "So far as our experience has gone, it points to the fact that everything must die and disintegrate at the end of its allotted span of life; man, the lower animals, the plants, the rocks, the universe itself, all are more or less progressing towards the end, to be resolved into their elements which then combine into other forms. But that, I take it, is not what you mean by everlasting life?"

"Oh, not at all," said the Modernist. "However much I may disagree with my friends here on other matters, we all of us firmly believe in God and in the immortality of the soul. That is what we understand by everlasting life."

"You mean that your individuality continues to exist throughout the ages even after your body dies?"

"Our souls, yes," said the Priest. "Our earthly bodies die and disintegrate and are resolved into their elements as you say; but our souls, our spirits, live on eternally."

"And are judged by the Lord and either received into Heaven and eternally blessed, or condemned and sentenced to eternal damnation in Hell," added the Fundamentalist.

"And where are this Heaven and this Hell, as you call them?" asked the Martian.

"Heaven is the abiding place of God and His angels."

"His angels?" questioned the Martian.

"Yes," said the Priest. "Angels are bodiless spirits created to adore and enjoy God in Heaven."

"And also the spirits of the departed that have been judged worthy of being received into the presence of God," added the Fundamentalist. "Hell is the abiding place of those souls that are condemned."

"Yes, I know," said the Martian, "but where are these places located?"

"Heaven is up above," said the Priest.

"Up above?" echoed the Martian. "We Martians know there is neither above nor below in space; that what is 'up' to you would be what you would call 'down' to your people on the opposite side of your planet. We have never heard of this place you call Heaven."

"Heaven," said the Fundamentalist, "might be a few miles away and you would not know it, for our souls cannot find it until our bodies have died."

"Then how do you know that it exists at all?" asked the Martian.

"Because the Bible tells us so."

"And we have also the word of our holy fathers of the Church, who were inspired of God," added the Priest.

"Is Heaven or Hell described in any other place than in this book?" asked the Martian.

"No," said the Priest, "that is the only place."

"And where in this book is this Heaven described?"

"Here," said the Fundamentalist, "in the Apocalypse of St. John the Divine."

"And Hell is also there described?"

"It is."

"So these departed souls," interrogated the Martian, "have the capacity of enjoyment in Heaven or suffering in Hell, though they have no material bodies, no brain, no nerves, no organs of sense?"

"Yes," said the Priest, "because they retain their earthly individuality."

The Martian spoke thoughtfully: "We on the planet Mars assume that an individual's personality is betokened by his mental attributes. He is bright, clever, alert; dull, foolish, or sluggish; he is kind, generous, benevolent; unkind, selfish, or malevolent. We have ascertained that whatever attributes he may possess, they are due to the character of his mentality. This, in turn, is determined by his physical attributes. We have found that a chemical change in his organism will oftentimes cause an entire change in one's personality. Do you say that this same personality persists although the body has disintegrated at death?"

"Yes," said the Priest, "as I have explained. The manifestations emanating from the brain do indicate one's personality, but the personality simply uses the brain as a vehicle through which it finds expression."

"I think I get your idea," said the Martian, "and when the body, including the brain, dies, then the personality departs."

"That's it," said the Priest, "just as one would escape from a falling house."

"Then the soul is the same when it leaves the body at death as when it comes into it at birth?"

"Not at all," said the Priest. "The soul develops as the child grows. It has a free will, and can choose between good and evil, and also as to how it will develop. It is the master of its fate."



"And your religion teaches you that you will meet your dear ones who have gone before you to this Heaven?" asked the Martian.

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist, "we will be reunited for ever. There will be no parting there. We will be for ever relieved from the cares and trouble of this world; we will be with our loved ones and enjoy with them eternal bliss."

"Of what will this bliss consist?" asked the Martian.

"Why," said the Fundamentalist, "we will live in love and peace; we will chant the praises of God and be happy in His presence."

"Will there be nothing else for you to do? No work, no occupation, no deeds to accomplish?"

"Oh, yes; we, as emissaries of the Lord, will guard and safe-keep our loved ones and other good people on earth."

"But your god would not need you for this if, as you have told me, he is omniscient and omnipotent. As an infinite being he could obviously be everywhere at once."

"Our God entrusts some of these duties to His angels," said the Fundamentalist.

"And to the saints," added the Priest, "who frequently intercede with God in our behalf and plead with Him to grant our prayers."

"You mean," asked the Martian, "they direct your god's attention to points in your favour that He might otherwise overlook?"

"Oh no! He grants the requests of the Holy Virgin and the blessed saints who intercede for us because of their purity and perfection and because of the great and holy work done by these saints when they were on earth."

"And do these angels of whom you have spoken guide the affairs of the universe? "

"To an extent, yes," said the Fundamentalist. "They act as the messengers of God in answering prayers offered up by those on earth."

"And they are eternally happy, are they? "

"Eternally happy, yes," said the Fundamentalist.

"Then they do not know of the suffering that goes on on earth? "

"Oh, yes," said the Fundamentalist, "but they know that it is only temporary."

"They also know that some of those on earth will not be accepted into Heaven and will suffer through eternity, do they not? "

"Yes."

"Would you be happy under such circumstances? " asked the Martian.

"I believe in justice, and these people would not be sent to Hell unless they deserved it," said the Fundamentalist.

"You would have pity for them, would you not; and if you had a profound pity, could you be happy? "

"No, I could not have pity for them if they had been wicked and had rejected God," said the Fundamentalist.

"Very well," said the Martian. "You have made it clear. Now, when a child is accepted into Heaven does it progress there or remain a child? "

"I presume it develops just the same as its soul would develop here."

"You say, however, it would not have the trials and tribulations which are sent to you on earth to form your character."

"Well, its character would develop some way," answered the Fundamentalist. "I am frank to state

that we are not sure about this. God did not tell us this in His Book, and I am only expressing my belief. It may be that the child rests as a child in Heaven."

"And that would be true even if it were an infant not yet able to speak?"

"Yes, I presume so."

"I would like to understand further," said the Martian. "Suppose a mother of a five-year-old child died at the age of, say, twenty-five years. If the child lived a good life would it be reunited after its death to its mother in Heaven?"

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist, "and it is a wonderful thing."

The Martian continued: "Suppose the child grew up and did not die until it was seventy-five years old. May I inquire whether its soul would appear in Heaven as the five-year-old child in order to be reunited to its mother, or would the mother of twenty-five welcome her child of seventy-five?"

"Their souls would be united. It would not make any difference how old they were," answered the Fundamentalist.

"But the soul of the child of five would have entirely changed, would it not, into the soul of the adult of seventy-five?"

"I keep telling you," said the Fundamentalist, "that the mother's soul would be reunited with the child's soul, and that age would not count."

"I see," said the Martian. "Now, if the child should turn out to be wicked, it would not be reunited with the mother."

"No," said the Fundamentalist, "it would be condemned."

"Yet the mother, you say, in Heaven, would have

## 66 INQUIRES AS TO EVERLASTING LIFE

eternal happiness knowing that her child was suffering in Hell, is that it? "

" Well," said the Fundamentalist, " we have no right to delve too deeply into God's mysteries. It is something that we ought not to think about."

## CHAPTER X

### THE MARTIAN EXAMINES THE MORAL PRECEPTS OF CHRISTIANITY

"You have admitted," said the Modernist to the Martian when the party assembled a few days later, "that there are many noble sentiments and precepts expressed in the Bible, in spite of its contradictions and inconsistencies?"

"Unquestionably," said the Martian, "there are some highly ethical principles not only in your New Testament, but in your Old Testament as well. Do I understand that your whole system of ethics and morality is based on this book?"

"Without the moral teachings of that Book," said the Modernist, "the world would be chaos. Crime and vice would be rampant, and no man would be safe."

"That is hardly an answer to my question," said the Martian. "It is, of course, self-evident that without a system of social laws by which men may live together no man would know how to conduct his life. My question, however, was not whether this book contained moral precepts, but whether your present code of ethics and social intercourse is based solely upon the teachings of this book."

"It is," said the Fundamentalist; "that Book is the only source of morals we have. The Lord not only revealed His laws and commandments through the patriarchs of old, but came down to earth Himself to

save us from our sins and teach us the nobler principles of the New Testament. It is only since then that man has been able to live his full life in Him."

"I deny that," said the Rabbi. "There are sentiments just as noble in the Old Testament as in the New."

"Let us not go into a discussion of that now, if you please," said the Martian. "Since our last meeting I have had the opportunity to examine your Bible more thoroughly, and have also visited your public libraries. I would like to know whether it is your contention that the Bible alone is the source of morality and right living."

"The only source," said the Fundamentalist. "The world would have been wicked and without any morals whatever had God not taught us in the Bible what is right and wrong."

"And is that your view also?" asked the Martian, turning to the Priest.

"It is," said the Priest.

"And yours?" addressing the Modernist.

"I would hardly go so far as to say that it is the only source of our morality; but without the example and the teachings of Jesus to guide us we would flounder helplessly."

"I have learned," said the Martian, "that your world had many ancient religions and schools of philosophy which taught many of these principles."

"Their followers were heathens," said the Fundamentalist. "Their religions were false; their gods were myths. How then could their principles be the same as the blessed teachings of our Lord?"

"Let us examine into them," suggested the Martian. "I understand that the most venerated principle taught by your saviour god is to do unto others as you would be done by."

"Yes, the Golden Rule," said the Modernist, "and the highest moral principle that could be taught."

"I doubt that," replied the Martian. "To me it contains elements of selfishness and implies that one is to be kind only in the expectation that he may receive kindness from others. Moreover, he sets his own standard as the standard for others. There are, however, men whose greatest joy is in sacrificing themselves for the good of others without hope of return. Such men would not wish others to make sacrifices for them; they follow a higher ideal. Still, I will admit your rule is a good working rule from a utilitarian standpoint. But you do not mean to imply that this rule of conduct was not taught before the coming of your saviour god some two thousand years ago?"

"That is just what I do mean to tell you," said the Fundamentalist. "It was our blessed Saviour who first taught it."

"I regret I must disagree with you," said the Martian. "According to the records in your libraries, the same teaching was advanced by a Chinese named Confucius who lived five hundred years before the advent of your saviour god. He taught, 'Have one heart with your fellow-men or behave to them as you would have them behave to you.' Lao-tze, his contemporary, expressed the same rule. Moreover, if you will examine your Bible where this rule is given, you will see it is followed by the statement of your saviour god, 'for this is the law and the prophets,'<sup>1</sup> indicating that it was merely a restatement of an old precept."

"That is what I maintain," said the Rabbi, "and I want to say further that Rabbi Hillel, who taught in Judea just before the time they say Jesus appeared, formulated the rule as follows: 'What thou dost not

<sup>1</sup> Matt. vii. 12.

like, do thou not to thy neighbour. This is the whole law; all the rest is explanation.' <sup>1</sup> The author of the Book of Tobit also said, 'Do that to no man which thou hatest.' " <sup>2</sup>

"But the rabbis put the golden rule in the negative form," said the Modernist; "they did not teach action towards our fellow-men along this principle, but merely to refrain from doing things."

"A distinction without a difference, I should say," replied the Martian. "Obviously one living in the society of his fellow-men must act in some manner towards them. If he refrains from doing anything to others which he would not have them do to him, it is plain that all his actions towards them would necessarily be such as he believes to be just."

"The Greek Epictetus also taught: 'What thou avoidest suffering thyself seek not to impose on others.' <sup>3</sup> However, the rule is put in the affirmative in the Indian Epic poem 'Maha-Bharata,' written during the sixth century before the birth of your saviour. I find it there expressed:

'This is the sum of all true righteousness:—  
Treat others as thou wouldst thyself be treated.  
Do nothing to thy neighbour which thereafter thou  
wouldst not have thy neighbour do to thee. In  
causing pleasure, or in giving pain, in doing good  
or injury to others, in granting or refusing a request,  
a man obtains a proper rule of action by looking  
on his neighbour as himself.' " <sup>4</sup>

"Nevertheless," said the Modernist, "the fact that Confucius and others taught the rule cannot deprive Jesus of the credit of having taught it."

<sup>1</sup> Sabbath xxxi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Tobit iv. 15 (Apocrypha).

<sup>3</sup> Fragments xxxviii.

<sup>4</sup> *Bible Myths* (Doane), 7th ed., p. 416.



"Surely not," answered the Martian, "only I am curious to learn why you insist that it is distinctively a Christian doctrine, since it was taught by many others before the coming of your saviour god."

"But after all," said the Priest, "that is only one moral rule. You will find many other noble precepts which I am sure you will not find anywhere else. Take, for example, His command to love your enemies, to bless them that hate you. The Old Testament taught revenge, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but the New Testament teaches us to return good for evil. Where else can you find that noble sentiment?"

"The precepts were not new," said the Rabbi. "In Leviticus we are taught, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.'<sup>1</sup> In the Book of Exodus it is said: 'If thou meet thy enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again.'<sup>2</sup> In the Book of Proverbs it says: 'If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink.'<sup>3</sup> Job said: 'This also were an iniquity; if I have rejoiced in the destruction of him that hated me.'<sup>4</sup> And in the Book of the Rabbis it is said: 'If thine enemy and thy friend both have need of thee, aid first thy enemy as it is a greater victory for thyself.'<sup>5</sup>

"I find these sentiments expressed also," said the Martian, "outside of your religious books. Marcus Aurelius, a pagan Roman emperor, stated: 'Shall any man hate me? Let him look to it; but I will be meek and benevolent towards every man;'<sup>6</sup> Plutarch said: 'To forgive an enemy when a man hath the opportunity to avenge is a token of magnanimity; but who doth not love for his humanity, and admire for his probity, the man who showeth mercy to an enemy in

<sup>1</sup> Lev. xix. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. xxiii. 4-5.

<sup>3</sup> Prov. xxv. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Job xxxi. 28-29.

<sup>5</sup> Baba Mezia, 32.

<sup>6</sup> *M. Aurelius*, xi. 13.

affliction, who helpeth him when he is in want, and giveth aid to his children and family in adversity? ”<sup>1</sup>

“ But Jesus taught more than that. We must not only return good for evil and love our enemies, but we should also bless them that hate us,” said the Fundamentalist.

“ And you believe that is a worthy principle of conduct? ” asked the Martian.

“ Most certainly,” answered all the clerics.

“ It seems to me that neither your god of the Old Testament nor your saviour god seems to have practised it,” commented the Martian. “ And may I ask in this connection who is the greatest enemy of mankind? ”

“ The Devil is man’s greatest enemy,” answered the Fundamentalist. “ He it is who has caused all the sin and suffering in the world; he was, and always has been, the enemy of God and man.”

“ And you love this ‘ Devil,’ as you call him? ” asked the Martian.

“ How can you ask that? ” said the Fundamentalist. “ You horrify me.”

“ And does your saviour god love this Devil? ”

“ No, no; He repeatedly showed His abhorrence of him and of his works. The Devil even tried to tempt Him, but failed miserably.”

“ He endeavoured to tempt your all-powerful god ! ” exclaimed the Martian.

“ Yes, and failed.”

“ Rather a foolish devil, I should think,” remarked the Martian *sotto voce*. He added aloud :

“ Then neither your god nor you love this enemy nor bless him? ”

“ God did not mean that when He said ‘ love your enemies and resist not evil,’ ” said the Priest. “ We of course must detest evil and fight evil. We must pro-

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *Of the Use of Enemies*, ix.

tect ourselves and our homes against evil; otherwise evil would conquer the whole world."

"But," observed the Martian, "your Lord commands that if your enemy smite you on one cheek you should turn to him the other also; that if a robber takes your coat you should give him your cloak also."

"No, no; you have misinterpreted that," said the Modernist. "It means that we must not carry hate even against our enemies."

"I nevertheless believe it is a noble principle to love your enemies," said the Fundamentalist, "and you must admit that it belongs to the teachings of Jesus only."

"Oh, no," said the Rabbi, "you will find it taught in the Old Testament."<sup>1</sup>

"Well, at any rate it is found only in the Bible," said the Fundamentalist.

"Impracticable as the principle seems to me," said the Martian, "I find it has been taught by many who lived before your saviour god. In fact, it would appear that practically every moral precept in your New Testament was taught many years before. I will enumerate a few which you will undoubtedly recognize. In the 'Maha-Bharata,' to which I have just referred, it is said: 'Conquer a man who never gives by gifts; subdue untruthful men by truthfulness; vanquish an angry man by gentleness, and overcome the evil man by goodness.'<sup>2</sup> In the Egyptian 'Book of the Dead,' written centuries before your Bible, the following are indicated as the duties of a pious man: 'To feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, bury the dead, loyally serve the king.'

"Plutarch said: 'He who has done some good and laudable action and then telleth it to others showeth

<sup>1</sup> Prov. xxv. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Doane, *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, 7th ed., p. 415.

that he still looketh without and desireth glory and hath not yet a true vision of virtue.' <sup>1</sup> Seneca said: 'How sweet and precious a thought it is if a giver will take no thanks and hath already, in giving, forgotten his deed.' <sup>2</sup> Epictetus said: 'Wait not for applauses, and shouts, and praises in order to do good.' " <sup>3</sup>

"I would like to refer to some of the sayings of my people," said the Rabbi. "You will find them in the writings of the rabbis antedating the Christian era. Practically all of them, some thinly disguised, others not, have been placed in the mouth of Jesus of Nazareth as original with him.

"You will find these sayings of the rabbis: 'Do good for good's sake with a pure intention: make not of it a crown wherewith to adorn thyself;' <sup>4</sup> 'Whosoever hath a crumb of bread in his sack, yet asketh, What shall I eat to-morrow? is a man of little faith;' <sup>5</sup> 'Let care wait until its hour cometh; it will then weigh heavy enough;' <sup>6</sup> 'Judge not thy neighbour until thou hast stood in his place;' <sup>7</sup> 'There was a time when to him who said, Remove the toothpick from thy tooth, a man used to say, Do thou remove the beam from thine own eye;' <sup>8</sup> 'Cast not pearls before swine;' <sup>9</sup> 'From the stalk ye know what fruit the gourd will bear;' <sup>10</sup> 'It is not fine words, but good deeds, that avail.' <sup>11</sup>

"Even the Christian Lord's Prayer is antedated by the Talmud and the rabbis, as shown by these excerpts:

"The opening of the ancient Kaddish Prayer is given as follows: 'Magnified and sanctified be His great name. . . . May He establish His Kingdom.' When

<sup>1</sup> Plutarch, *On Progress in Virtue*.

<sup>2</sup> Seneca, *On Benefits*, ii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Epictetus, *Fragments*, lxxxiii.

<sup>4</sup> Nedarin 62. <sup>5</sup> Sotah xlvi. 2. <sup>6</sup> Berachot ix. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Pirke Abot ii. 4 (a saying of Hillel).

<sup>8</sup> Baba Bathra xv. 2. <sup>9</sup> Mibchar Hapninim, I.

<sup>10</sup> Berachot, xlvi. 1. <sup>11</sup> Pirke Abot, i. 17.

asked for a short prayer, Rabbi Eleazar said : ' Thy will be done in Heaven, and peace to those who fear Thee on earth ; ' <sup>1</sup> Rabbi Hillel said : ' Blessed be God every day for the daily bread He gives us ; ' <sup>2</sup> Rabbi Megileah said : ' Whoever is ready to forgive shall have his sins forgiven ; ' <sup>3</sup> another Rabbi said : ' Lead me neither into sin nor into temptation ; ' <sup>4</sup> and the public prayers in the temple ended thus : ' Praised be the name of the glory of thy kingdom for ever . ' " <sup>5</sup>

" Yes," remarked the Martian, " I have noted those sayings, and it seems to me impossible to avoid the conclusion that every rule of conduct taught by your saviour god was old when your saviour was born ; that his entire teaching is merely an iteration of what had been taught in other religions and by pagans, as you call them, for many, many years prior to his coming. Therefore your present code of morals, while to an extent in accord with the principles he taught, is in no way, or in the slightest degree, founded upon his life as an example, or upon his teachings as original precepts. It seems your system of ethics is a growth, as everything is a growth. In your advance towards civilization men of noble sentiments have appeared and expounded their doctrines, and as you have progressed in enlightenment you have adopted them."

" Such men were inspired of God and sent to us as noble examples of how we should follow in His steps," said the Fundamentalist.

" But I find it impossible to understand the necessity for the visit and sacrifice of your saviour god to the earth, since he taught nothing new, and your history indicates that men followed these precepts as much before as after his coming."

<sup>1</sup> Berachot, xxix. 2.      <sup>2</sup> Jom. Tob xvi. 1 (a saying of Hillel).

<sup>3</sup> Megileah xxviii.      <sup>4</sup> Berachot xvi. 2.      <sup>5</sup> Berachot xiii. 3.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO MIRACLES

"You have several times referred to the many proofs to establish that your god is the only true god," remarked the Martian.

"These proofs are absolute," said the Fundamentalist. "You need only to read of the miracles He performed, the signs He gave, to convince you that He is the true God."

"There are many recorded in the Bible," said the Priest.

"And they are all true," added the Fundamentalist.

"May I ask how you know they are true?" said the Martian.

"Because the Bible tells of them, and the Bible is the Word of God," answered the Fundamentalist.

"If I understand you," said the Martian, "you maintain that they are true because the book which tells of them is the word of your god, and you know the book is the word of your god because it tells of the miracles performed by him."

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist.

The Modernist turned to the Fundamentalist :

"Do you really believe," he demanded, "that a whale swallowed Jonah, retained him alive in its stomach for several days, and then spewed him up?"

"The Bible says it was done," answered the Fundamentalist. "I believe in a God who can make a whale

and can make a man, and make both do what He pleases."

"But do you believe he made them—that he made such a fish and that it was big enough to swallow Jonah?"

"Yes, sir," said the Fundamentalist emphatically. "Let me add: one miracle is just as easy to believe as another. A miracle is a thing performed beyond what man can perform. When you get beyond what man can do you get within the realm of miracles; and it is just as easy to believe the miracle of Jonah as any other miracle in the Bible."

"Perfectly easy to believe that Jonah swallowed the whale?" asked the Modernist.

His sarcasm was lost on the Fundamentalist, who answered calmly:

"Yes, if the Bible said so."

The Modernist could no longer restrain his impatience.

"Can't you see," he said to the Fundamentalist, "it is by such ridiculous assertions as you have been making that you throw discredit upon the whole Christian religion? Every thinking man knows that the laws of Nature do not change, that every effect is the result of a natural cause, and that therefore such a thing as a miracle is impossible? If you would cease talking nonsense about miracles and confine your religious utterances to the great truths of Christianity which sensible men can believe, you would get back to Christianity as Jesus taught it."

"I will say this," responded the Fundamentalist with considerable heat, "it is just such men as you, who call themselves Christians, and yet do everything in their power to discredit the Blessed Book, that are responsible for the spread of atheism and lawlessness throughout the land. Instead of fighting these blas-

phemous creatures of the Devil, you encourage them in their nefarious schemes to destroy Christianity and all morality. I would like to ask who has given you the right to pass judgment on the inspired Book that has been the only source of light and truth for nearly two thousand years."

"There you admit you are as guilty as he," said the Priest, in turn addressing the Fundamentalist. "What right have you, or had those whom you profess to follow, to dispute the correctness of the teachings of the only true Church—the Church that was established by God Himself, the Church whose head is appointed by Divine guidance, the Church that for upwards of two thousand years has withstood all attacks and has so ably spread real Christianity and civilization over the whole world; whose members to-day far outnumber those of all your sects put together; the Church wherein the Bible is read and expounded by those whom God Himself appointed, and who, under His guidance, teach what He taught, and in the way He commanded? On you and your Churches, which for five hundred years have protested against and belittled the teachings of the Holy Catholic Church, encouraging attacks upon it, rests the blame for the deplorable condition of Christianity to-day."

"Gentlemen," said the Martian, who had noted the acrimony of the discussion, "don't you think it would be well to get back to our subject? I find it somewhat difficult to keep abreast of you. Won't you point out these miracles to which you have referred?"

"I can do that," said the Rabbi. "You will find many of them recorded in the Old Testament, which is the only true Word of God."

"No, no," said the Fundamentalist; "you must consider the New Testament as more important than



the Old Testament, for that is the basis of the Christian religion."

"Perhaps we should consider both," said the Martian. He turned to the Rabbi: "Will you point out the miracles in the Old Testament?"

"It would take too long to enumerate all of them," said the Rabbi, "but you might turn to the Book of Exodus, where the miracles of Moses and his brother Aaron are recorded. Here it tells where Aaron appeared before the King of Egypt and cast his rod on the ground as the Lord directed, and it changed into a living serpent, proving that the Lord was the true God."<sup>1</sup>

"But I notice," said the Martian, examining the account, "that the king called for his wise men and they also cast down their rods, which became serpents."<sup>2</sup>

"Yes," said the Rabbi, "but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods."<sup>3</sup>

"I see," said the Martian.

The Rabbi continued: "Then Aaron sat on the brink of the river, and with his rod turned its waters to blood as the Lord directed; all the fish died and the river became foul and the blood rushed throughout all the land of Egypt.<sup>4</sup> This showed the true God. No one but the true God could have performed that miracle."

"Nevertheless, I read in the next paragraph," said the Martian, "that the magicians of Egypt did in like manner with their enchantments.<sup>5</sup> It is difficult to understand how they could have done so, for all the waters had already been turned to blood; but it does not appear that these miracles were performed only through your god."

"Oh, you do not understand," said the Priest. "God permitted the Egyptian magicians to do these things in

<sup>1</sup> Exod. vii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Exod. vii. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Exod. vii. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Exod. vii. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Exod. vii. 22.

order that Pharaoh's heart might be hardened so that he would not let the children of Israel depart."

"Ah, yes," said the Martian, "so it appears."

"You will note also that the Lord caused all of Egypt to swarm with frogs," said the Rabbi.<sup>1</sup>

"And that the magicians of the king performed this miracle also,"<sup>2</sup> added the Martian.

"Yes," said the Priest, "but it was by God's will."

"May I point out one more miracle," said the Rabbi, "which no one else ever performed—that was when Joshua stopped the sun in its course for a whole day?"<sup>3</sup>

"Gentlemen, you amaze me," said the Martian. "We learned many years ago that the planets, including the earth, move around the sun, and that the sun does not move around the planets."

"Really," said the Priest, with an evident desire to escape from the Old Testament, "we are more concerned with the miracles of the New Testament, for we want you to understand that our Saviour was really God. In the first place, His birth was a miracle, since He was born of a virgin."

"But," said the Martian, "the records in your libraries tell of many others who were looked upon as gods because they were born of a virgin."

"But they were pagan gods," said the Priest, "and we do not believe these myths."

"But I would like to refer to a number of them," remarked the Martian. "I find an account of a god called Buddha who was born of a virgin mother named Maya. It is said that his birth was brought about by the descent of the divine power called the Holy Ghost upon the Virgin Maya."<sup>4</sup>

"That is a myth," said the Priest.

<sup>1</sup> Exod. viii. 6.      <sup>2</sup> Exod. viii. 7.      <sup>3</sup> Josh. x. 12-13.

<sup>4</sup> Doane, *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*. 7th ed., pp. 116 et seq.

"I find the Chinese nation," went on the Martian, "claimed that their philosopher Lao-tze, to whom we have already referred, was born of a virgin.<sup>1</sup> All of these accounts date from before the birth of your saviour god."

"But you cannot believe that such tales are true," said the Fundamentalist.

The Martian resumed: "I find that in Egypt a child named Horus, who was also called a saviour, was born of the Virgin Isis, and that pictures representing his birth appear on the walls of temples more than two thousand years old. His father was said to be the god Osiris."<sup>2</sup>

"Fairy tales, all of them!" exclaimed the Fundamentalist.

"I notice also," continued the Martian, "that Zoroaster, the law-giver of the Persian nations, is said to have been the son of a virgin.<sup>3</sup> In Greek records I find it stated that Bacchus was the son of the head god Jupiter and of a mortal mother named Semele; that Perseus was the son of Jupiter by the virgin Danae."<sup>4</sup>

"But those all have been shown to be myths," said the Priest.

"May I ask how?" asked the Martian.

"Because these things are contrary to the Bible," said the Fundamentalist; "because there never was any God but the true God, and no one was ever born that way but Jesus."

"I might add," said the Martian, "that I have found many more records of virgin births, but will mention just one or two more. It is reported that when the Spaniards arrived in Mexico they found the Mexicans worshipping a saviour god called Quetzalcoatl, who

<sup>1</sup> Doane, *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, 7th ed., pp. 120 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

was born of a virgin to whom Heaven had announced that she should bear a son without connection with man. Her name was Sochiquetzal, and she was called the Queen of Heaven.<sup>1</sup> In Yucatan they also had a virgin-born god named Zana, who was the only begotten son of their supreme god Kinchahan."<sup>2</sup>

"They were all heathens," said the Fundamentalist. "Ours is the only true God. The accounts of the others are simply myths handed down without basis of fact."

"Nevertheless," said the Martian, "I find some of your early Christian fathers referring to these pagan gods. One of your Christian writers, Justin Martyr, in the year A.D. 140, writing to the pagan Roman Emperor Hadrian, says :<sup>3</sup>

'By declaring the Logos, the first-begotten of God, our Master, Jesus Christ, to be born of a virgin, without any human mixture, we say no more in this than what you say of those whom you style the sons of Jove. For you need not be told what a parcel of sons the writers most in vogue among you assign to Jove. . . .

'As to the Son of God, called Jesus, should we allow him to be nothing more than man, yet the title of "The Son of God" is very justifiable, upon the account of His wisdom, considering that you have your Mercury in worship under the title of The Word, a messenger of God. . . .

'As to his being born of a Virgin, you have your Perseus to balance that.' "

"Yes," said the Priest, "but did you note also that he gave the explanation for this when he says :<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Doane, *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, 7th ed., p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>3</sup> *Apol.* I, ch. xx, xxi, xxii.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. lix.

'It having reached the devil's ears that the prophets had foretold that Christ would come, he set the heathen poets to bring forward a great many who should be called the sons of Jove. The devil laying his scheme in this, to get men to imagine that the true history of Christ was of the same character as the prodigious fables and poetic stories.' "

"I still would inquire why you accept as true the story of the divine birth of your saviour but reject the accounts of these others."

"Because there are circumstances attending the coming of our Lord which prove we are right," said the Priest. "His coming was prophesied. You will find it written in the Old Testament that a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel."

"It was foretold!" exclaimed the Martian. He examined the passage, then compared it with the Hebrew text handed him by the Rabbi. "It would be remarkable if true," he said, "but I find that in the original of this passage in the Hebrew language<sup>1</sup> the word translated as 'virgin' really should be rendered 'young woman,' and that the passage should read, 'Behold, the young woman is with child, and beareth a son and calleth his name Immanuel.' " <sup>2</sup>

"I deny that," said the Fundamentalist, "and furthermore, the miraculous events which occurred at the time of the birth of Jesus are unique and prove He was God. A new star appeared in the heavens, the

<sup>1</sup> Isa. vii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew text is "lakem yittam adonai hu lakem oth hinneh ha-almah harah ve-yeldeth ben ve-kareth shem-o immanuel": literally, Therefore shall-give my-lord he (himself) to you sign behold the-young-woman conceived (is pregnant) and-beareth son and-call-eth name-his immanuel. (Wheless: *Is it God's Word?* p. 283.)

heavens rejoiced, the heavenly host sang, wise men came from the East and recognized Him, and a bright light shone around Him."

"I have read those passages in your Bible," said the Martian; "but I have also read in the Buddhist sacred books, which antedate your Bible, that the birth of their Buddha, named Gautama, was announced in the heavens by a star which was seen rising on the horizon and known as the messianic star; that wise men known as Holy Rishis were informed by this celestial sign that a Messiah was born."<sup>1</sup>

"You do not seem to understand that that is a heathen myth and not the history of a true god," said the Priest.

"I find it recorded," went on the Martian, "that when Buddha was born all beings were full of joy, and that the attending spirits who surrounded the Virgin Maya and the infant saviour sang the praises of the blessed one and said: 'To-day Bodhisatwa is born on earth to give joy and peace to men, and Devas, to shed light in the dark places, and to give sight to the blind.'<sup>2</sup> I find it recorded that Mithra, the Persian saviour, was visited by wise men called Magi and was presented with gifts consisting of gold, frankincense, and myrrh."<sup>3</sup>

"But these accounts are not inspired accounts and are not true," said the Fundamentalist. "To quote heathen mythical tales proves nothing."

"I find it on record," said the Martian, "that when Buddha (called the saviour of the world) was born a dim light danced around his person;<sup>4</sup> that when Bacchus was born a bright light shone around him so that there was a brilliant light in the cave;<sup>5</sup> that when the saviour

<sup>1</sup> Doane, *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, 7th ed., p. 143.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

Aesculapius was born his countenance shone like the sun and he was surrounded by a fiery ray; <sup>1</sup> that as soon as Zoroaster was born the glory arising from his body enlightened the whole room." <sup>2</sup>

"All this does not affect the claim that Jesus was the son of God," said the Priest.

"May I proceed?" asked the Martian. "As I have said, I find many records of saviours, the stories of whose lives on earth and whose deeds are similar to those of your saviour. I am particularly struck with the story of the Hindu god Krishna, for I find many remarkable parallels to the story of your saviour as told in your Bible, and I would like to point out these parallels so that you may explain to me why you consider one a myth and the other a true tale."

"It will be instructive," said the Modernist.

"I find," said the Martian, "that Krishna was born of a chaste virgin called Devaki, who was selected by the Lord for this purpose on account of her purity.<sup>3</sup> Vishnu, the all-ruling deity of the Hindus, said: 'I will become Incarnate Mathura in the house of Yadu and will issue forth to mortal birth from the womb of Devaki. It is time I should display my power and relieve the oppressed earth from its load.'<sup>4</sup> A chorus of Devatas celebrated with song the praise of Devaki, exclaiming: 'In the delivery of this favoured woman all nature shall have cause to exult.'<sup>5</sup> The birth of the child was announced in the heavens by his star.<sup>6</sup> On the morn of Krishna's birth, the quarters of the horizon were irradiate with joy, as if moonlight was diffused over the whole earth; the spirits and nymphs of Heaven danced and sang, and the clouds emitted low,

<sup>1</sup> Doane, *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, 7th ed., p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 114.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

pleasing sounds.<sup>1</sup> Krishna, though royally descended, was actually born in a cave in a state most abject and humiliating.<sup>2</sup> The moment he was born the whole cave was splendidly illuminated, and the countenances of his father and his mother emitted rays of glory.<sup>3</sup> The divine child—Krishna—was recognized as heaven-born and adored by cowherds, who prostrated themselves before him. He was received with divine honours, and presented with gifts of sandal-wood and perfumes. Soon after his birth the holy Indian prophet Nared, having seen his star shining in the heavens and hearing of the fame of the infant Krishna, paid him a visit at Gokul, examined the stars and declared him to be of celestial descent. Krishna was born at a time when Nanda—his foster-father—was away from home, having come to the city to pay his tax or yearly tribute to the king. The ruler of the country, having been informed of the birth of the divine child, ordered the massacre in all his states of all the children of the male sex born during the night of the birth of Krishna.<sup>4</sup>

“Do you not recognize that this is the same story as that related in your Bible?” asked the Martian.

“But we have other evidences of our Saviour’s life in our sacraments that have come down to us,” said the Fundamentalist, ignoring the question. “We know He was born on the 25th of December, because that is the day on which we celebrate His birth.”

“I must confess I do not get your point,” said the Martian. “Is it not a fact that the 25th of December was not adopted as the birthday of your saviour until about four hundred years after he lived?”<sup>5</sup>

“I think that is correct,” said the Modernist.

<sup>1</sup> Doane, *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, 7th ed., p. 279.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 279, 280.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.



"And it seems to me worthy of remark," said the Martian, "that according to the records Buddha, the son of the Virgin Maya, was born on December 25th;<sup>1</sup> that the ancient Persians celebrated the birthday of their saviour, Mithra, on December 25th;<sup>2</sup> that the ancient Egyptians for centuries before the birth of your saviour celebrated the end of December as an anniversary of their saviour Horus, the son of a holy virgin who was born on December 25th;<sup>3</sup> that the same date is the birth of the Greek god Bacchus, born of a virgin and called the saviour;<sup>4</sup> that the birthday of Adonis, another saviour, was celebrated on December 25th."<sup>5</sup>

"They were all false heathen gods," said the Fundamentalist, "and never existed."

The Martian went on: "I find that your church father St. Chrysostom, who lived about the year 390, referred to these numerous festivals held on December 25th in the following language: 'On this day also the birth of Christ was lately fixed at Rome in order that whilst the heathen were busy with their profane ceremonies the Christians might perform their holy rite undisturbed.'<sup>6</sup>

"Then you speak of the celebration of your saviour's resurrection in the spring of the year."

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist. "Our Lord was crucified and was buried; He rose again from the dead the third day, ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. We celebrate Easter as the day He arose."

"But why," asked the Martian, "do you point to

<sup>1</sup> Doane, *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, 7th ed., p. 363.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 367.

the ascension of your god as evidence of the inspiration of your Bible, when, from the accounts I have read, these other saviours to whom I have just referred also rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven about the same time of the year? As a matter of fact, I learn that your very word 'Easter' receives its name from a celebration in honour of the Saxon goddess Eostre. In looking through the records I find it is stated that Krishna, the Hindu saviour to whom I have already referred, was crucified but rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven; that Buddha ascended bodily into Heaven after his death, as did Zoroaster, Aesculapius, and Adonis; that Osiris, the Egyptian saviour, after having been put to death, arose from the dead and ascended into Heaven and bore the title of the 'Resurrected One'; that Mithra, the Persian saviour, rose from the dead, that Bacchus rose from the dead, and that even the Mexican saviour Quetzalcoatl rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven. These resurrections are all said to have occurred about the time of the vernal equinox.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, I find that practically all of them died on a cross. Your records tell of at least sixteen crucified saviours who rose from the dead."

"But even if all that were so," said the Fundamentalist, "it would not mean that our Bible is not true. Those spurious miracles you find in other so-called religions are absurd. There is only one God; He is Lord of the universe, and whatever takes place is by His will and direction."

"I merely inquire again," said the Martian, "why you deem all these accounts to be myths, and insist that the same story is true when told in your Bible?"

<sup>1</sup> Doane, *Bible Myths and their Parallels in other Religions*, 7th ed., pp. 215 *et seq.*

We on Mars have never known of one that rose from the dead, and, as such an occurrence would be contrary to the laws of Nature as we know them, we would demand strong proof of such an assertion before giving it credence."

"But our Bible is the Word of God, and is the truth," said the Fundamentalist.

"May I advance this thought as to miracles generally?" remarked the Martian. "Are you not inconsistent in that you obviously regulate your entire lives on a disbelief in the interruption of the laws of Nature? You make an appointment to meet a friend, relying upon your train or your steamship to carry you to the appointed place at the time agreed upon. If the train is delayed, you do not pray to your god to remove the obstacle, but your engineers look after the defect in the machinery. When a steamer lists or sinks you seek the cause in conformity with the mechanical laws you have learned. When you hear of an accident you seek its cause along the lines of natural laws. To-day in your ordinary affairs you no longer ascribe interruptions in your course of life to miracles or to the intervention of supernatural beings, for you have learned that they are the result of natural laws operating as they have always operated."

"That may all be true," said the Fundamentalist; "nevertheless, I believe in the miracles described in the Bible, for there is no doubt that the inspired men who wrote of them believed them, and what they were willing to believe I am willing to believe."

"In ancient times," replied the Martian, "your ancestors, I learn, believed the sun and the moon were pushed across the sky by angels. Astronomy taught you they moved in accordance with unchangeable laws, so that to-day you are able to predict to the fraction

of a second when the shadow cast by your earth will eclipse the light of the moon. You point your telescopes, and discover a planet of which you have never heard, but which your knowledge of mathematics and of Nature's laws convinces you exists at that particular spot. Your ancestors believed the coming of a storm was the caprice of a god; meteorology to-day enables you to predict when and where the storm will strike. They believed disease was caused by devils or evil spirits, and relief was sought by prayer; to-day, through the researches of your scientists, you know that disease is due to natural causes, and by applying sanitation you are steadily overcoming the ravages of disease."

"Why shouldn't we take advantage of the discoveries of these men whom God has gifted with genius?" asked the Fundamentalist. "It is God's way of showing His love for us, permitting us to enjoy the fruits of the labours of those men whom He has endowed with minds that point out the way to progress."

"My point is," answered the Martian, "that when you ceased to see your god in the lightning, and to believe that the destruction of your houses was a visitation of your god, you invented the lightning-rod and protected your homes. You learned the reason for the winds and tides, and to-day your airmen consult your meteorologists instead of resorting to oracles and offering prayers and sacrifices as you did in the past. When you studied Nature's ways you were able to improve on her and produce fruits and plants never before known, and to increase the production of Nature's fields. In short, when you ceased to believe in miracles and special providence you started to rely upon yourselves. The result has been an accumulation of comforts and pleasures of which your religious age never dreamed. You must realize that by your own works

only you have progressed, and that you have never progressed through supine submission to Nature's forces."

"But there are many phenomena that cannot be explained by natural laws. What can you say as to them?" inquired the Modernist.

"All the wonders of science to-day would at one time in your course of development have been called miracles and ascribed directly to supernatural beings," answered the Martian. "Is it not, therefore, fair to presume that what seems to you to-day to be beyond natural laws is deemed so only because you have not acquired full knowledge of the natural laws governing such phenomena? Even should you see what you call the soul of a departed friend, is not the perception more likely to be due to some natural psychic or biological law of which you are ignorant than to the existence of a being separate and distinct from its material body, since up to this time all experience of man tells us that intelligence and life can exist only in connection with matter?"

"Jesus appeared in the body to His disciples after He died," said the Fundamentalist. "How do you account for that?"

"One of your scientists has said that 'in experimental science it is always a mistake not to doubt when facts do not compel you to affirm.' And I might add that, inasmuch as in all our experience we have never known Nature's laws to be other than immutable, it follows that before we can assume a phenomenon to be supernatural we must first be sure that it cannot be the result of some natural law. You admit that you have only a slight knowledge of Nature's laws. Have you, in fact, any reasonable proof of the occurrence of these miracles?"

92 MARTIAN INQUIRES AS TO MIRACLES

"Yes, yes. We *have* proof incontrovertible," exclaimed the Fundamentalist; "those miracles occurred because the Bible says they occurred. *There is the proof.*"

"But where is your proof that the Bible is true?" asked the Martian.

"Proof that the Bible is true?" repeated the Fundamentalist. "There is no need of proof; it is the Bible, the Word of God. We know it is the Word of God, and we need no proof, because we have FAITH."

## CHAPTER XII

### THE MARTIAN EXAMINES INTO FAITH

"FAITH," echoed the Martian. "May I inquire as to its meaning as you employ the word?"

"Those who have faith," said the Priest, "believe in God; they believe in the Bible as God's Word; they believe that Jesus was the Son of God through the Holy Spirit, and that He is God Himself; they believe that He rose from the dead, and is now the living God who rules the universe; and they believe also in the infallibility of His Holy Church."

"His last statement is untrue," said the Fundamentalist.

"By 'faith,'" inquired the Martian, "you mean believing what your reason would tell you is not so?"

"For those who have faith," said the Fundamentalist, "there is no need for reason." He rose to his feet. "You may point out as many supposed contradictions in God's Holy Word as you like, but I say to you, *there are no contradictions*. If God says in His Word that the earth is flat, then I declare unto you that when He said it *the earth was flat*. If the Bible says there was light on the earth and in the heavens before God made the sun, then *there was light* on the earth and in the heavens before the sun was made. If God's Word says the sun moved around the earth, then I tell you, my brethren, that day the *sun did move around the earth*. To doubt the Word of God is to surrender to the Prince of Darkness. Satan is always at hand trying

to lead men into infidelity by tempting them to doubt the truth of God's Word."

He paused for breath, and the Modernist spoke :

"I could not revere a God who would demand that I believe what I can't believe because it is contrary to the reason with which He endowed me."

"Reason! Reason!" retorted the Fundamentalist, "I tell you it is not to be relied upon. Reason is influenced by prejudice and passion. That is why God gave us His Holy Word to guide us. He tells us to search the Scriptures—not with the design of examining whether they be right or wrong, but as our *infallible guide*. You might as well doubt your own existence because you cannot understand the wonders of the nature of your soul and body. By faith we live and by faith shall we die, and by faith we shall have everlasting life in Jesus, our Lord."

"Oh," said the Martian, "I begin to understand the meaning of your word 'faith.' Is the religion of the rest of your gentlemen founded on this same faith?"

"It is indeed," answered the Priest and the Rabbi.

"It is not," said the Modernist, emphatically. "We use our minds; we have examined the Bible and subjected it to the same criticism to which we would subject any other piece of literature. We know the Books of Moses were not written until centuries after his death, if indeed he ever lived; we know that most of the tales in the Bible are myths and legends borrowed from the pagans and handed down by tradition from ages before the Bible was written. We know that the so-called laws of Moses were written by a group of priests at the time of King Josiah after the Babylonian captivity; we know that the four gospels were not written by the men whose names they carry; we know that not only



the story of the divine birth, but of the crucifixion and the resurrection of the saviour god, as well as his ethical teachings, were centuries old at the time he is supposed to have been born. We know the Bible is merely the literature of an ancient race; that the god of the Old Testament was a tribal god whom the Hebrews borrowed from the Kenites; that his character bears the impress of the character of the tribes who created him and who wrote of him, and that according to the character of the men who wrote of him he was revolting, cold, and cruel, or tender, just, and merciful. But we believe in the better moral precepts of the Bible, teach them, and try to follow them."

"If that be Christianity, what, I would ask, is infidelity?" interjected the Fundamentalist.

The Martian continued to interrogate the Modernist:

"Then you reject the idea of a god and merely practise and teach a code of ethics?"

"No, no, no; do not misunderstand me. We are Christians."

"But you say you do not accept the Bible as the word of your god, and do not believe the tales upon which the Christian doctrine is founded."

"We do accept its high moral teachings, but we do not accept the idea of God as there portrayed."

"And you do not observe the rites and sacraments of the Christian Church?"

"Not all of them, of course. We do, however, observe the two great customs of Christmas, the anniversary of the birth of Jesus, and Easter, the anniversary of his resurrection."

"You puzzle me, for you say you celebrate these two events, yet do not believe in the occurrences they symbolize."

"We believe in the immortality of the soul; we

## 96 THE MARTIAN EXAMINES INTO FAITH

believe in a future life, but we do not believe in what is contrary to reason."

"Then I take it that your belief in the immortality of the soul is based on reason. I would be interested to hear the evidence that has satisfied your reason."

"My belief is based on reason because it is the only way we can account for the scheme of life. There must be a future life, for we feel there must be something more."

"Yes, I can understand your emotions as to that; but will you tell me the basis of your belief which you say is founded on reason? You have undoubtedly had evidence of some form of existence after death; have perhaps communicated or talked with those that have died?"

"No, I cannot say that, but we are sure there is a future life."

"But your evidence, based upon which your reason tells you there is a future life?"

"Why, from time immemorial as far back as history goes, all men have believed in immortality. Besides, how could the apparent injustices of this world be adjusted if there were not a future life?"

"Does the fact that many have believed a thing prove it to be true?" asked the Martian. "And what leads you to believe that injustices must be compensated? Your civilized nations do not hesitate to deprive savage tribes of their lands and property and even of their lives; are these oppressed people to have justice against you in the future life? You slaughter and feed upon innocent animals. Would you have them in some future life slaughter and feed upon you in order that your injustice to them may be compensated? Have you any other evidence as to the existence of a future life?"

"It is true," answered the Modernist, "that science in its analysis of matter has not discovered a soul, but there are many things that science cannot explain. Consider the beauty of a sunset, a living picture of joy in the world of our consciousness. It is the ultimate product of creative co-ordination. If man have no soul, how does the beauty of the sunset appear in the world of his consciousness?"

"In ancient times," replied the Martian, "your ancestors accounted for what they did not understand by conceiving of demons, devils, witches, and the like. You cannot understand the existence of a sense of beauty or of ideals in man; therefore you conceive of a soul to account for it. Is your logic any sounder than that of your ancestors?"

"The facts of life are sufficient to warrant our belief in the existence of a soul."

"Let me understand. You say you believe that man has descended from the lower animals through gradual evolution."

"That is correct," answered the Modernist.

"He believes man descended from the monkeys," broke in the Fundamentalist.

"That is the ignorant assumption of men who know nothing about evolution," replied the Modernist. "We believe man was descended from an ape-like ancestor who was also the ancestor of the man-like apes; but no evolutionist believes man was descended from any species of monkeys or from any other species of animal now existent. We believe that that common ancestor descended, along with other species, from another common ancestor, and so on down the countless ages until we come to the primordial singled-cell organism from which all animal as well as plant life developed."

"And you believe that when man was evolved a

## 98 THE MARTIAN EXAMINES INTO FAITH

soul was implanted in him by your god? " asked the Martian.

" We believe that there developed in some way a soul in man," answered the Modernist.

" But you believe the development from the lower animals to man was so gradual that at some point in his progress you would not have been able to determine with assurance whether he was a man or a lower animal? "

" Yes, that is true."

" Then will you tell me where the soul first appeared? Do you believe your lowest type of savage man possesses a soul? "

" We do."

" And that his soul will continue to live after his physical death? "

" Y-e-s," reluctantly admitted the Modernist, who began to perceive the drift of the Martian's questions.

" And if this development from the lower animals was so gradual as to present no clearly defined line of demarcation between the lowest man and the highest ape-like ancestor, must you not then logically believe that this ape-like ancestor possessed an immortal soul which somewhere still exists? "

" It is possible," answered the Modernist.

" And that, in accordance with the theory of evolution, all the lower animals, even the insects, and in fact all forms of life, including plants, must have immortal souls? "

The Fundamentalist made no effort to conceal his glee as he watched the Martian gradually impale the Modernist on the spear of his relentless logic. He chuckled audibly.

" That's the religion of ' Reason ' ! " he exclaimed. " That's Evolution. That's Modernism ! "

But the Martian had not exhausted the subject. He asked the Modernist :

"Do you still insist that man has an immortal soul?"

"Yes, I do," replied the Modernist defiantly.

"And that somewhere the souls of all the men that have died since man first evolved from the anthropoid ape ancestor exist and will exist for ever?"

"I do."

"And do you believe that these souls exist in the condition in which they left these ape-like men; or have those souls developed since they left their earthly bodies?"

"It is possible they may have developed."

"Then you would naturally believe that the souls of you and of your contemporaries will develop after death?"

"That would be a reasonable belief."

"And it would follow that the souls of these ape-like ancestors who died hundreds of thousands of years ago would now be far more advanced than those of you and of your contemporaries, whose development is limited by earthly conditions, would it not?"

"Well, perhaps I am mistaken, and they have not developed."

"In that case you will depart from this life to join a company of souls the tremendously vast majority of which would be of a character far inferior to the soul of the lowest savage that now inhabits the earth?"

"I cannot answer that question," replied the hard-pressed Modernist irritably, "but nevertheless I believe in the existence of a soul and in its immortality."

"But must you not concede that such belief is based entirely upon that faith with which our Fundamentalist friend is so abundantly supplied?"

"It is based upon faith, yes; but mine is a reasonable faith, not faith in absurdities."

"Hear him!" exclaimed the Fundamentalist. "*Our* faith is 'absurd,' but *his* is 'reasonable.'"

"Well," said the Martian, "I think we should be

satisfied with our friend's explanation, inasmuch as he is willing to concede that his belief in an immortal soul is founded upon faith and not evidence." He again addressed the Modernist :

" Now may I ask as to your belief in the existence of a benevolent god? You agree with our friends, I understand, that this Guiding Intelligence, the Power beyond Authority, whom you all call God, is all-wise, loving, and benevolent. Do *you* base that belief on evidence aside from your Bible? "

" God has given us our lives," answered the Modernist; " has provided a beautiful world; has given us love, ideals; has showered innumerable blessings upon us; God is Love and Benevolence."

" But by your own definition of god as the guiding spirit of the universe, the first great cause, he must also be accountable for storms, droughts, earthquakes, pestilences, sickness, and all other causes of distress and suffering. These evils so far outweigh your ' blessings ' that most of your philosophers agree that it would be better for one never to have been born. Your Bible itself states, ' Life is of few days and full of trouble. ' "

" It is our own fault if we do not find life worth living," remarked the Modernist.

" You understand," said the Martian, " we are not now discussing the god of the Bible; we are speaking from the standpoint of reason, which implies drawing conclusions along logical lines from established facts as a premise. You have admitted that your belief in the soul and in its immortality must be based upon faith."

" That is fair," said the Modernist.

" You then point to Nature and her works as evidence of a benevolent guiding intelligence which you call ' God. ' To me your evidence is not sufficient to establish that a

god exists, although I do not deny that such an intelligence may exist. We do not know and frankly so admit."

"You lack faith," said the Fundamentalist.

"We do," answered the Martian dryly.

"I have asked you, therefore," said the Martian, again addressing the Modernist, "to state your reasons for believing that this guiding intelligence is benevolent. If we point to Nature, I cannot see how you can do otherwise than agree with me that life is a constant battle, not only between all creatures, but between every living organism and the forces of Nature itself—a battle in which no quarter nor mercy is shown. Does it not follow logically that if your god be manifested in the guidance of Nature and Nature is cruel, your god himself is cruel?"

"Nevertheless," said the Modernist, "I will assert and maintain that we are ruled and guided by a good, loving, kind, and merciful Power."

"Thank you," said the Martian. "I am sure now I comprehend the points of view of all of you. Our friends the Priest, the Fundamentalist, and the Rabbi accept the Bible as true and as inspired by your god. They believe every word of their respective versions of it although they differ as to the interpretation of some parts. They frankly base their belief on that strange attribute called Faith which permits them to believe in spite of contradictions, absurdities, and impossibilities, and are thus enabled to believe that their god of the Bible is a good, kind, and benevolent being. They evidently follow the Church Father Tertullian, who lived about A.D. 200. He said: 'I maintain that the Son of God was born; why am I not ashamed of maintaining such a thing? Why! but because it is itself a shameful thing. I maintain that the Son of God died; well, that is wholly credible because it is monstrously absurd. I maintain that after having been buried he

rose again; and that I take to be absolutely true, because it was manifestly impossible.’<sup>1</sup> Our friend the Modernist has no faith whatever in your Bible as the word of his god, rejects the god of the Bible, and relies upon his reason. On the basis of his reason he believes in a supreme intelligence, which he also deems is good and benevolent in spite of all evidence to the contrary.

“Now it is clear to me,” continued the Martian, “that you have two meanings for your word expressing benevolence. Apparently you would consider a man who would torture or murder innocent children as an utterly wicked, loathsome individual; yet when the same deeds are perpetrated by your god, you persist in calling him kind, good, and benevolent.”

“We have no right to judge Him by our standards,” said the Priest.

“But how can you have two standards of good and evil? You have a language by means of which you communicate your thoughts and ideas to one another. When you speak to me of a good man I understand you mean one who is kindly, unselfish, benevolent, beneficent, charitable, tolerant, merciful; but when your god performs acts which in a man would be considered cruel, malevolent, uncharitable, unmerciful, and abhorrent you nevertheless look upon them as actions of a good god and render him praise and thankfulness.”

“We consider Him good and benevolent,” said the Modernist, “because He is the motive power which tends to produce a fine personality in a human being. We believe God is Goodness and Benevolence because——”

“Because you have faith,” finished the Martian. “You judge a man by his works, but your god by faith. I did not before fully understand the meaning of faith. Now I assume that you, as leaders in religion, teach according to your respective beliefs?”

<sup>1</sup> *On the Flesh of Christ*, ch. v.



"We do," said the Rabbi, "each according to his light, and that is why we have so many sects and religious groups; but so long as one honestly expresses what he believes we respect him regardless of differences of opinion."

"We also respect one who is honest," said the Martian, "however much we may think he is in error. But there is still one thing that mystifies me. You believe," he said, addressing the Modernist, "in the existence of a god, in the existence of a life after death, and in the benevolence of this god. All that I can understand. Your faith supports your belief in these matters in spite of what your reason tells you. But you also state that you do not believe your god would or could change his immutable laws in order to grant a prayer; nevertheless, you say you pray and invite your people to pray, when you know that such a prayer is presumptuous, vain, foolish, useless, and, in fact, an insult to an all-wise intelligence."

"It is true we pray to Him," answered the Modernist. "We open our hearts and commune with Him that our souls may be in harmony with the Infinite. Only those who have suffered can feel how very real God is to the believing soul. Faith experiences joys which Doubt can never know."

"But do you consider it the part of a reasoning man to endeavour to be 'at one' with a god who permitted and still permits cruelties such as constantly occur and frequently make life a hideous nightmare to innocent men and women?"

"But I preach and teach morality," replied the Modernist, "the morality of Jesus, the perfect man."

"Even so," responded the Martian, "but you know and admit that many had preached the same moral precepts before Christianity came into the world and before your Bible was written. I can see the need of

teachers of morality, but why do you teach it as a *professed emissary* and in the name of the Bible god *whose existence you deny*, and in the name of a Christian sect whose creed *you dare not openly recite as your true belief*? Above all, you call yourself a Christian and hold yourself out as a Minister of the Christian gospels, when you admit that you reject every basic tenet of the Christian religion—original sin, atonement, and redemption. You do not accept the story of Adam and Eve, therefore you cannot believe in the doctrine of original sin. Without original sin there can be no atonement nor redemption. Without a belief in these fundamentals how can you call yourself a Christian?

"The Rabbi has used the expression 'honest.' On our planet that is understood as meaning truthfully expressing and acting according to one's beliefs. Have you then another meaning for your word 'honest' based upon faith, which is unknown to me, just as you have another understanding of your words 'good' and 'evil'?"

"Why—why——" stammered the Modernist.

The Fundamentalist broke in :

"You see where our friend the Modernist is led through submitting the Blessed Bible to criticism and analysis. Why does he not accept it as the Word of God as I have accepted it and believe it? True faith is what he needs, and if he would have faith he would not be in the position he finds himself."

"Exactly," said the Priest, "and if he would leave the interpretation of this Blessed Book to those great minds of old who generation after generation have studied it and interpreted it he would be much better off. That is our position; we have faith not only in the Bible as the Word of God but in the infallibility of the interpretations made by our holy fathers of the Church.

"But I maintain," continued the Priest, "that religion is necessary to the world. Suppose we assume that I, as a representative of the only true Church, should lose the faith that I possess and, by applying my knowledge of Nature's laws and by reasoning, should arrive at a conclusion that our religion is unwarrantable, absurd, and untrue. Nevertheless, I would still contend that the Church is necessary, and that the vast majority of the people need, and would be benefited by having, a belief in a Heavenly Father, a future life, and reward or punishment after death."

"That is to say, if I understand you," said the Martian, "you would sacrifice truth if by so doing you could give to your brethren what you think they need?"

"I would," answered the Priest, "and in that I have the authority of St. Paul, who said: 'For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto His glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?'<sup>1</sup> We have also the example of our blessed Saviour, who taught in parables so that some might not understand His real meaning, and of God Himself, who said: 'If the prophet be deceived when he has spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet.'<sup>2</sup>"

"But you have told me your god is truth itself."

"God *is* truth," said the Modernist.

"Ah, yes," said the Martian. "For the moment I had forgotten your faith. Your pardon." The Fundamentalist looked pleased. "Do you all agree with our friend the Priest that religion has been and is good for your world?"

"Yes, we all are agreed on that," said the Modernist. "We may differ in our creed, but we all believe in the Church as an institution, and in the value of religion to the world."

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel xiv. 9.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE MARTIAN EXAMINES INTO THE VALUE OF RELIGION

"WITH us," said the Martian, "religion as you have explained it to me does not exist; but if, as you say, it has made your world better, I would like to know in what respect; for we always seek means of bettering the conditions of the inhabitants of our planet. Will you indicate the manner in which your religion has advanced the condition of your earthly brothers?"

"We are speaking of Christianity only," said the Modernist, "for of course we do not mean to say that all religions have enured to the benefit of mankind."

"That will be understood," said the Martian. "If, as you say, Christianity is the best of all religions, it would be the one I prefer to accept as a model. I would therefore like to hear of the benefits conferred by Christianity."

"As to that we will have no difficulty," said the Priest. "Christianity has always been the cause of progress. It has extended its influence throughout the entire world, bringing civilization to every part of the globe."

"Are you so sure of that?" asked the Martian. "I have found, in examining into your histories, that prior to the establishment of Christianity there had been numerous civilizations; that the arts, the sciences, and philosophy flourished in the country called Greece centuries before your era, and many centuries before that

in China, India, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Babylon, and Crete. I find that about the time your religion was founded, civilization flourished in the extensive empire called Rome, and that in Alexandria in Egypt there was an enormous library with over five hundred thousand volumes, containing a record of the wisdom of the world. I have found that after the adoption of Christianity as a religion by the Roman Emperor Constantine civilization began to disappear and you had a period of about a thousand years during which practically all science, the pursuit of knowledge and truth, was abandoned. Do you ascribe the resumption of scientific research to Christianity? "

"It was at the beginning of the dark ages, as we call them," said the Modernist, "that paganism, as represented by the library at Alexandria, was destroyed by Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria, under the Christian Emperor Theodosius, when the collected literature of Greece, Rome, India, Egypt, and perhaps other ancient civilizations, was destroyed."

"Those were pagan books," said the Fundamentalist, "and they were contrary to the teachings of the Bible and therefore dangerous."

"I understand that that was the reason for their destruction," said the Martian. "I have found," he went on, "that the learning of the people known as the Moors in Spain, contained in a great library of over four hundred thousand books, was burned in the public square by order of the Christian monarchs; that the Moors' scientific instruments were broken to pieces because, as one of your historians puts it, they were 'almost universally viewed with mingled dread and suspicion as infernal apparatus for the prosecution of magic and the invocation of demons.'"

"Yes," said the Fundamentalist, "the Moors were

not Christians, and their literature was of the same sort as that of the Alexandrian Greeks."

"I am beginning to comprehend," said the Martian; "but perhaps I can appreciate the situation better as to the benefits conferred by Christianity if we consider the present state of your civilization and trace its growth."

"That would be well," said the Fundamentalist, "for you will find that the Church has always been on the side of God and truth."

"Suppose we consider then some of the many blessings you now enjoy," said the Martian. "You have investigated, discovered, and mastered many of the laws of Nature which were unknown to your ancient peoples, and by such mastery your scientists have brought to you comforts and conveniences undreamed of by your ancestors. Did Christianity lend its aid to these scientists?"

"The Church always led the march of civilization," said the Priest, "and spread it throughout the world."

"Let us see," said the Martian. "To-day, through the aid of your knowledge of medicine and sanitation, not only have many epidemics and plagues practically disappeared, but the average span of life of your fellow-men is considerably longer than it formerly was. Was this due to Christianity?"

"I will say that it was not," said the Rabbi, who spoke with considerable bitterness. "My people have always had a leaning towards the practice of medicine and surgery, but the Christian Church would not even permit us to dissect the human corpse until the reign of the freethinker, Frederick II, in the thirteenth century. It was claimed by the Church that disease was due to the presence of devils in the sick, and that the only cure was by prayer and the exorcising of the devils."

Origen, one of the early Fathers of the Church, said : ' It is demons which produce famine, unfruitfulness, corruptions, and other pestilences ; ' and St. Augustine said : ' All diseases of Christians are to be ascribed to these demons ; chiefly do they torment fresh baptized Christians, yea, even the guiltless newborn infants. ' "

" Your remarks agree with what I have learned from the records in your libraries," said the Martian. " But I find that when the laws of Nature were studied and the real causes of disease of the human body became understood sanitation, right living, and rational treatment did away with these plagues, pestilences, and many diseases, which were no longer looked upon as due to devils and demons, but as due to causes which could be controlled through your knowledge of the laws of Nature."

" But," asked the Modernist, " will you not give credit for that to Christianity? You have seen our hospitals abounding everywhere. Surely Christianity has done much good in this respect."

" The Christian Church, I find," answered the Martian, " for many centuries opposed medical and sanitary research as being contrary to the teachings of your saviour god, who taught belief in demons, witches, and the like. I find it recorded that as late as 1591 Eufame Macalyane, a lady of rank, was burned at the stake by the Christians of Scotland for having sought a drug to lessen the pain when her two sons were born, it being said that she tried to avoid your god's primeval curse on women. I further find that owing to the position of your Christian Church, which held that the insane were possessed of devils, such unfortunates were loaded with chains, flogged, and forced to swallow filth and vile concoctions in order to drive the devils out of them. I cannot see that Christianity helped mankind in

medicine, especially when I contrast this treatment with the science of medicine as practised by those whom you designate as pagans and who lived prior to your Christian era."

"But it was the Christian monks who kept alive the light of science during the dark ages," said the Priest, "for they were practically the only ones that knew how to write."

"I think your histories ascribe that honour to the Jews," said the Martian, "who, being driven from Spain when the Moors were expelled, disseminated throughout Europe the knowledge derived from the Moors (pagans as you call them), and that your monks were more engaged in writing the lives of fictitious saints than in conducting scientific investigations. Indeed, if some of your historians are not mistaken, many priceless ancient manuscripts were obliterated in order that your monks might use the parchments upon which they were written."

"Do you not overlook the numerous colleges and universities that have been founded by men of the Church," asked the Priest; "many of them endowed by the Church, and encouraged in their search for light and truth?"

"No," answered the Martian, "I do not. It is true your Churches to-day encourage learning to some extent, but the vast majority of them still oppose the teaching of evolution, the groundwork to-day of practically every science. In the past they all opposed the teaching of geography, which sought to learn something of the earth and its inhabitants. Your Catholic Church burned at the stake Cecco d'Ascoli, a noted astronomer, for teaching that there were people living on the opposite side of the earth. One of the arguments advanced against him was that of your Church Father St. Augustine. He



insisted that man could not be allowed by the Almighty to live at the antipodes, because if they did they could not see Christ at his second coming descending through the air."

"But Christianity has always endeavoured to work for the improvement of mankind," insisted the Modernist. "The early and mediæval Church of course made mistakes due to the general ignorance of the times, and there were at times evil men in control. But the Church was not Christianity, for Christianity, and especially modern Christianity, has always striven and is now constantly striving for the betterment of the human race."

The Martian answered: "I cannot see how you can dissociate the Church and Christianity, for the power of the Church was derived from your Bible, the basis of Christianity. In its activities the Church claimed, and I understand claims to this day, that it followed and is following the will of your god. With this as its claimed source of authority, it opposed the teachings of astronomy and persecuted your scientists as heretics, their teachings being held to be contrary to your Bible. It burned at the stake Bruno, Servetus, and many others, for teaching that the earth revolved around the sun, and other scientific truths. It strangled and then burned at the stake its own Christian preacher Tyndale, whose offence consisted only in translating your Bible into the English language.

"It opposed, as being contrary to the teaching of your Bible, the sciences of geology and philology—even political economy; it opposed the teaching of chemistry and physics as being black magic and contrary to your Bible—the sciences which have so much contributed to the happiness of your people. It opposed the teachings of hygiene, believing that the evils resulting from in-

sanitary conditions were due to the wrath or malice of unseen evil spirits, and were to be avoided only by the use of charms, fetishes, and prayers."

"But it freed the slaves and emancipated women," protested the Modernist.

"On the contrary," answered the Martian, "it favoured slavery under the Biblical injunction that slaves should obey their masters, and it opposed the emancipation of women under the Biblical injunction that woman must be subject to her husband.

"In short, if your records are true, your Christian religion, whether Catholic or Protestant, attempted, by means of the most horrible tortures and always in the name of your god, to thwart every movement that we on Mars have encouraged as being for the improvement of the race."<sup>1</sup>

He paused.

"Your arguments are those of the atheists and the materialists," said the Fundamentalist, "who speak only of the earthly body and forget the spiritual. What matter a few years of earthly suffering if thereby a man's soul is purified and perfected, fitting him for an eternity of happiness with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?"

The Martian continued: "This blind faith of yours, which neither seeks nor desires truth, compels you to believe contrary to your reason and to existing facts, and naturally fosters ignorance and intolerance, which

<sup>1</sup> The reader who seeks corroboration of the Martian's preceding statements should consult White's *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology*. White divides his two volumes into chapters dealing with Evolution, Geography, Astronomy, Geology, Anthropology, Ethnology, Meteorology, Chemistry, Physics, Medicine, Hygiene, Philology, and Political Economy. In every chapter he demonstrates by copious references that science has had to struggle long and painfully against the reactionary Christian Church.

are the parents of crime and vice. Because of this faith, with its opposing views, your religion has caused untold misery and suffering too distressing to describe. The old pagan religions were in the main tolerant and were not proselytizing; they permitted men to worship as they pleased, and to pursue truth and engage in scientific research. The various sects of your religion, on the contrary, have in almost every case deemed it incumbent upon them to convert others to their beliefs, and to use physical torture to effect such conversion under the guise of saving their souls. I read that in a single night one of your sects murdered ten thousand of another sect merely because of a disagreement as to the teachings of your supposed saviour. I find that hundreds of thousands of your people were burnt at the stake or tortured in the most horrible manner, in the name of Christianity, because they disagreed with the belief of the particular sect in power, and that innumerable wars were fought solely on religious grounds. Amongst the religious band known as Puritans, women were stripped to the waist, tied to a cart, and flogged through the streets because of honest differences in religious matters."

"There was no excuse for the forming of those different sects," remarked the Priest. "All of them grew out of an unwarranted attack on the Church founded by our Saviour, and of a wicked revolt by men who listened to the voice of evil and broke away from God and the Church. They, and they alone, are responsible for the creation of the various sects, for they could not agree amongst themselves. There are no sects in the Holy Roman Catholic Church."

"Nor would you have had sects if you had no religion," replied the Martian, "and without sects you would have avoided countless disputes. Without dis-

putes you would have lived as brothers instead of as enemies; not only would countless lives have been spared and untold misery avoided, but there would have been a steady, uninterrupted advance in knowledge of the arts and sciences had the light of wisdom not been smothered under the blanket of religious zeal. Your histories show that Christianity, far from advancing civilization, has wofully retarded it."

"We have admitted," said the Modernist, "that there have been in the past unworthy and misguided men in the Church; but those times have passed, and to-day the Church upholds science, it encourages the arts, and it lends its support to the sick and to the unfortunate."

"Your Church to-day," answered the Martian, "has been compelled to follow the lead of science because truth has lived and advanced in spite of the efforts of the Church to crush it. Your religion has been against science and freedom of thought because your Bible, on which you base your religion, is against science and freedom of thought. To-day you encourage science and freedom of thought only to the extent that you have lost faith and broken away from your Bible and your Christian religion. I have found this demonstrated by the fact that in proportion as your people are religious so are they ignorant and intolerant of knowledge."

"Oh, you are mistaken as to that," said the Priest, "for we still have our religion and we encourage education and freedom of thought."

"I probably do not understand your terms," said the Martian. "You still have your creeds and your sects, and they still teach intolerance and enforce mental slavery. To-day you forbid in parts of your land the teaching of biology, of astronomy, of geology, and of

many other sciences, because they disagree with your Biblical account of the creation of the universe which we Martians know to be untrue. You have only a short time ago harassed to his death a scientist who produced new fruits, new flowers, new foods for you, because he dared to say he did not believe in your god of the Bible. One of your largest manufacturing plants up to recently refused to employ men of a certain creed. Why? "

"Because," said the Fundamentalist, "there is only one true religion and any teaching contrary to the Bible is dangerous and a menace, since it tends to destroy faith."

"Your pardon," said the Martian. "I am continually forgetting how richly you prize this faith of yours which can upset the laws of Nature, accept as true two opposing assertions, and dissolve existing facts; that faith which closes your mind to reason and truth; that causes you to cling to error, and which leads to stagnation instead of to progress."

"You would then have us abandon all religion?" asked the Priest. "A world without religion would be terrible. We would have no civilization, no morals, no ideals, no love, no honour."

"Permit me to remind you that the many ancient nations had no religion if, as you say, Christianity is the only true religion. Yet your records disclose that they were far advanced in the arts and in many of the sciences. In their philosophy they showed a purity of sentiment and high moral standard. In fact, if we may judge from such of their writings as escaped your attempt to destroy them, they have never been surpassed by any of your later philosophers, even your saviour himself. Your very laws protecting women and children are modelled upon those of Hammurabi,

promulgated twenty-one hundred years before the birth of your saviour, and recently brought to light by your excavations of ancient cities."

"But," interposed the Modernist, "if we reject the belief in a providential God who guides us in our destinies, what is the meaning of life? Can you find any purpose in the world? We are adrift without rudder or compass."

"Meaning? Purpose?" echoed the Martian. "Why should there be a meaning? why should there be a purpose? On what do you base your evident assumption that there must be a meaning to life or a purpose in the world? In the final analysis, is not your assumption based entirely upon man's egoism and selfishness? Throughout your religious view there is the evident belief that everything created is for man's especial benefit. When you seek a meaning or purpose for the existence of those far more numerous creations which are inimical to man's happiness, and which, as your god's creatures, have an equal right to live, you flounder and fail hopelessly.

"Disregard man's egoism for a moment; can you then find a necessity for insisting upon a meaning or purpose in creation? You are immediately at a loss, and you are at a loss because, aside from that egoism, there is no need for reason or purpose.

"But let us consider the question as it applies to man. Is there no meaning or purpose in a heart that thrills over a beautiful landscape; that draws inspiration from silent contemplation of the glories of a wondrous night; that throbs with appreciation over a noble deed of self-sacrifice, of love, or of charity? Must man cast aside all this as worthless because to him it is but transitory?

"Must he despair because his years are numbered

and not eternal? Is it nothing to go forward with courage, in the firm conviction that in man himself there exists the power to advance, to rise, to accomplish, and to make life happier for his fellow-creatures and for those that are to follow? Meaning? Purpose? The altruist finds the answer in this life; the egoist never finds it."

"You have no belief in a future life? No hope of the salvation of your soul? No faith whatever to uphold you?" asked the Fundamentalist.

The Martian smiled. "Faith? Oh, yes, indeed we have faith. Not a faith that demands belief in an impossible god who would change the order of the universe in order to grant a foolish prayer; not a faith that demands belief in an idle, futile life existing apart from the physical attributes that determine one's individuality; not a faith that demands belief that man can progress only through outside aid, to be obtained by humble grovelling, servility, and unctuous flattery. No, we have no such faith.

"But we do have faith in man himself. On Mars no superstitious belief, such as your Christianity, has destroyed man's faith in man; no fear of an arrogant, revengeful God, nor of a malicious, ensnaring Devil, has crushed man's confidence in himself. On man we pin our faith—a faith that can and does move mountains. It is a faith that finds a 'God'—if you please—in man himself."

"And have you no religion at all on Mars?" asked the Priest. "Nothing to guide you in your conduct, no one to remit your sins, no God to depend upon to comfort you in your sorrows and tribulations?"

"We have no monstrously cruel god to fear; no tyrannical god to worship, propitiate, or flatter in the hope of securing salvation for our own selfish person-

alities. We have no churches, no sects, and no religious creeds to sow dissension and create strife.

"We have no belief in a future life, with its accompanying debasing precept that the sole incentive for the practice of virtue is the hope of reward in a heaven, or the fear of everlasting misery in a bottomless hell. On Mars our guiding principle is to do good for good's own sake, and our golden rule is to help others to peace and happiness without thought of self."

"But love is the ideal of Christianity," protested the Modernist.

"The declared ideal, yes," replied the Martian, "but never realized because your degrading superstitious beliefs and fears and your religious dissensions have strangled love in its infancy. On Mars, having been always free from these superstitions and disputes, we have been able to develop to a high degree the power of love—that irresistible power, the germ of which is co-existent with life itself. We have made love the motive of life. Ideals and aspirations have reached realms unknown to your god-fearing, war-ridden, tear-stained Earth. With us the paths of truth and honour are man's natural way.

"We pass our lives in serene happiness, knowing that we are one with all that is. We live in peace, untrammelled by fears; content, when our task is done, to be dissolved in the great universal crucible; glad when we may truthfully say that our world is better for our having lived."



**A** YOUNG Martian inventor, having discovered the secret of gravity control, gets out into space on an inter-planetary visit. Great astonishment was caused when he landed on the Earth in a strange-looking shell, which bore no resemblance to an aeroplane, and announced that he was an inhabitant of Mars and begged our hospitality.

The main objective of the visitor was to gain knowledge, and in this work are set out his experiences when seeking the meaning of religion—to him a strange, mysterious subject.

The inquiries are put to a committee consisting of a Modernist, a Roman Catholic Priest, a Rabbi, and a Fundamentalist, and of these the Martian asks, "Who is God?" He goes on to inquire concerning Prayer, Sin, God's Word, Miracles, Everlasting Life, etc., and the reader is compelled to acknowledge that his acute questioning is always illuminating and impressive.